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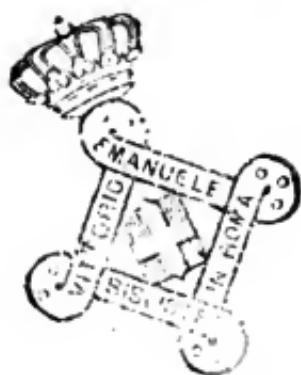
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their religious sentiment also, have been traced back of late years to one common Aryan type. An excellent account of these researches in comparative mythology has been given by the Rev. G. W. Cox in the preface to his *Tales of the Gods and Heroes*,—a work which, together with his *Tales from Greek Mythology*, ought to be in the hands of every scholar and of every schoolboy."

SATURDAY REVIEW, Dec. 19, 1863

TALES  
OF  
THEBES AND ARGOS.



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TO

# MAX MÜLLER, M.A.

FELLOW OF ALL SOULS COLLEGE  
AND TAYLORIAN PROFESSOR IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.



My dear Sir,

The permission to inscribe this volume with your name enables me to express my sincere thanks for the instruction and the genuine pleasure which I have received from your works in the sciences of Language and Comparative Mythology. The conclusions attained in the latter may be startling: but every step seems to be established with the closest as well as the most abundant evidence, while every inference, coming with all the weight of comparisons extended over more than the whole field of Aryan Mythology, throws a constantly increasing light on what had long been regarded as an incomprehensible and, in part, repulsive chapter in the history of the human mind.

I am, my dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

GEORGE W. COX.



## PREFACE.

---

OF the tales related in this volume the greater number are legends belonging to the families of Oedipus and Perseus. I have endeavoured to give these dynastic stories of Thebes and Argos as nearly in their original form as seems to be possible when the conflicting versions of poets and mythologists are taken into account. An examination of these tales can scarcely fail to show their affinity, or rather their identity, with many of the legends already recounted in the preceding volume, ‘The Gods and ‘Heroes.’ But this task has led (it would seem necessarily) to an analysis of the great legend of the Trojan war, as well as of some other myths which are narrated in the so-called Homeric hymns. If it can be shown that the Iliad is, in its framework and in all its more prominent features, the counterpart of the great epics of Northern Europe, and that the story of Achilleus is only a more magnifi-

cent version of the legends of Perseus, Theseus, Meleagros, or Bellerophon, some steps will be gained towards a determination of the process by which the Iliad was brought into its present shape. It may be some apology for the length to which I have found myself compelled to carry the Introduction to this volume, if it should in any measure serve to solve the difficulties which have gathered round this subject. Mr. Grote, in his History of Greece, has filled up or corrected much that was deficient or erroneous in the speculations which have issued from the school of Wolf and Lachmann; but, appreciating the characteristics of the Iliad far more keenly than Colonel Mure or Mr. Gladstone, he has not availed himself of the aid which he might have obtained from the researches of comparative mythologists. If the results attained by the latter are of any value, the method employed in attaining them must be capable of indefinite extension. With this conviction, I have ventured to examine the great epics of the Greek heroic age, and to express the conclusions which seem to be borne out by every portion of what, with Mr. Grote, I believe to be the original Achilléis, and (with scarcely less force) by the Odyssey.

Yet perhaps the attempt to bring out more

clearly the real nature of the Greek legends, and so to rebut all charges of conscious immorality from poets or mythographers, is one for which not much of apology will be demanded. The mythical stories of gods devouring their children, of unnatural marriages, and other horrors, were painful to the mind of many a Greek poet, and were indignantly thrust aside as unworthy of belief. Mr. Dasent has felt the weight of the same burden in treating of Norse mythology; and even comparative mythologists may look back to their school-days as to a time when the mythical tales presented little to attract and very much to repel them—when, in short, they merely strained the memory without exciting a single kindly feeling. If the science, which lays bare to us so much of the inner life of ages long preceding the dawn of contemporary history, has rent away the dark veil which shrouded the origin of these tales, it is a service for which all may well be grateful. If its method is right, then we may be assured that the Greek, the Norseman, the Hindu, and the Teuton did not sit down at the same time to frame immoral stories about divine or heroic beings, and succeed, each without the slightest knowledge of the rest, in producing and multiplying versions of one and the same story. The growth of

mythology followed inevitably on the separation of tribes: the era of its birth was not a period of gross, conscious, and determined depravity, breaking in on the steady march of ages. The history of Aryan civilisation furnishes no evidence of any such interruption.

I need scarcely say that, in relating the legends of Perseus, I have had no wish that my tales should be compared with the more elaborate narratives, founded on these myths, which form part of the Rev. C. Kingsley's '*Heroes*.' His occasional departure from what would seem to be the spirit of the original myth is but a slight blemish in a work of singular beauty.

## NOTE.

The method of giving Greek names in English has not yet been completely determined, although it seems to be generally agreed that the English form should approach as closely as possible to the Greek. I venture therefore to hope that I may be acquitted of pedantry, in adhering to the rule which, in a note on the orthography of Greek names prefixed to the Tale of the Persian War, I proposed to myself as the most convenient in the present state of the question. That rule must, of course, be relaxed as the Greek forms become more familiar to English readers.

A list, containing the principal names occurring in this volume, with their quantities marked, will be found in the second edition of the Tales of the Gods and Heroes.



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TALES  
OF  
THEBES AND ARGOS.

---

INTRODUCTION.

THE historian Hecataeus expressed an honest pride when he asserted that his sixteenth ancestor was a god.<sup>1</sup> The value of his genealogy would have been enormously enhanced, if the intervening generations could have been reduced to six or even to a smaller number.

Original  
value of  
Greek  
legends.

The extension of the line not only removed him further from the immortal being whose blood flowed in his veins, but it weakened the memory of the family legend which related the incidents of its origin. Each house, which boasted of its descent from Zeus or Heracles or any other of the gods, preserved the memory of the mortal maiden who so became the mother of a noble line.<sup>2</sup> But

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, ii. 143.

<sup>2</sup> The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women was specially designed to furnish a complete list of all such unions of heavenly beings with the daughters of men. In this supernatural origin lay the chief,

these family legends were intrusted for the most part to the frail vehicle of oral tradition; and constant variations so transmuted the old tales as not unfrequently to blot out all their original features. Lying out of the circle of national literature, even after the latter had been reduced to writing, they had none of the safeguards which the metrical form<sup>1</sup> and the jealous rivalry of rhapsodists<sup>2</sup> provided for the great national epics.

But if the citizen lived at so late a day that the attempt to trace back his own line to its divine founder became presumptuous and useless,  
Traditions of eponymous heroes. he could still take refuge in the legends which traced the origin of his city, his tribe, or his clan to some one of the glorious beings who were free from the doom of old age or death. Every country, every autonomous town, nay, even many a hamlet, thus had its eponymous hero;<sup>3</sup> and the strength and vigour of each community

if not the whole, value of Greek genealogies. See, further, Grote History of Greece, Part I. ch. xix.

<sup>1</sup> Tale of the Great Persian War, p. 276.

<sup>2</sup> Gladstone, Homer and the Homeric Age, vol. i. p. 57. Grote, History of Greece, vol. ii. p. 182.

<sup>3</sup> The practice might be carried to any extent by multiplying the children of the more prominent mythical personages. Thus the fifty sons of Lycaon supplied eonyms for as many Arcadian townships. Many of these, as Phigalos, Trapezeus, Thnokos, Akakos, Mantineus, Haliphthoros, are, like Pleuron, Kalydon, and Orchomenos among the Æolidæ, mere names. Pausanias, viii. 3.

determined the care with which the memory of this affinity was preserved. Each smaller town might boast its own immortal founder, or, for lack of such, it might fall back on the common origin of the larger society to which it belonged.

If, however, the Ionian and the Dorian, the Argive, the Athenian, and the Spartan, thus linked their own age with the ages of the gods, the jealousy with which they guarded the ancient legends which preserved these pedigrees, was not more remarkable than their persuasion that these legends had each their plain and indelible characteristics. That they looked upon them as genuine narratives of actual fact, it is almost superfluous to assert. Political alliances were made, and national quarrels excited or appeased, by appeals to the exploits or the crimes of mythical heroes. The Persian king, before setting foot on European soil, secured the neutrality of Argos by claiming a national affinity with the son of Danaë.<sup>1</sup> On the eve of the fight at Platææ, the Tegeatans did not scruple to waste precious moments in support of a claim founded on the exploits of the fabulous Echemos, while the Athenians held that they rebutted this claim by bringing up their ancient kindness to the banished Heracleidæ.<sup>2</sup> The tale of Othryades was regarded by Sparta and Argos

These traditions were treated by the Greeks as historical.

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, vii. 150.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. ix. 26, 27.

as a sufficient ground for inserting a special article into a treaty made during the Peloponnesian war.<sup>1</sup>

But if they were thus convinced of their historical truth, they felt still more certain that the

Each clan or tribe regarded its own traditions as distinct from any others.

legends of one state or city were essentially distinct from those of another. The Athenian never doubted that the tales which he had heard about Erechtheus or Theseus had nothing in common with the legends of Argos, Thebes, or Pheræ, beyond those incidents of local intercourse which were acknowledged by the narrative. The Arcadian, when he told the tale of Zeus and Callisto, never supposed that it was repeated by the Thessalian in the story of Phœbus and Corônis. Perseus, Cadmus, Jason, Achilleus, moved each in their own circle, and had left behind them a history seemingly as distinct as that of Athens and Sparta from the days of Leonidas and Themistocles.

This conviction was a dream. But it has its parallel in the scornful assurance with which the

*This belief was wholly without foundation.* British soldier would even now repudiate all affinity with the Hindu whom he holds in subjection. They who can see a little further know that this kindred is a fact too stubborn to be denied, while they perceive

<sup>1</sup> Tale of the Persian War, p. 380. Sir G. C. Lewis accepts the groundwork of the legend as historical (*Credibility of Early Roman History*, vol. ii. p. 515).

also that the national traditions of Hellenes, of Dorians and Ionians, with the political legends of Athenians, Thebans, Thessalians, Spartans, Argives, move in the same charmed circle and revolve more or less closely round the same magic point. The great family legend of the Perseidæ is as magnificent a subject for an epic as that of the wrongs and woes of Helen. Its incidents are not less marvellous, its action is scarcely less complicated. Like the tale of Troy, it forms a coherent whole, and exhibits an equal freshness of local life and colouring. It serves, therefore, the more completely to prove the extent to which the Hellenic local legends sprang up from a common source, and to furnish the means of detecting the common element in isolated traditions with which they may seem to be not even remotely connected.

To the citizen of the town of Argos the mere name of Perseus sufficed as a conclusive mark, separating him from all who traced their origin to Theseus or to Cadmus. Yet his designation as a destroyer of noxious things linked the son of Danaë at once with other heroes of Greek mythology. If Perseus won or deserved his name because he slew the deadly Gorgon or the Libyan sea-monster, Phœbus Apollo had also killed the mighty serpent Python, and Bellerophon received his title as the slayer of the

Connection  
between the  
legends  
of Argos,  
Thebes,  
and Athens.

fearful Belléros. It was the arbitrary sentence of the cruel and cowardly Polydectes which sent Perseus on his weary errand to the caves of the Graiae and the Gorgons; but it was no less the relentless hatred of the mean and false Eurystheus which made the life of the high-souled Heracles a long series of unrequited labours. Nay, Apollo himself was driven forth to serve as a bondman in the house of the kindly Admétos, and, with Heracles, to look in vain for a recompense from the treacherous Laomedon. If, in doing the bidding of the Seriphan king, Perseus encountered overwhelming dangers, Theseus surmounted perils not less appalling, for the same reason and from the same motives, while his victory over the Minotauros only repeats the slaughter of the Libyan dragon by Perseus. Thus, then, as unwilling workers, as destroyers of unclean or hurtful things, Perseus, Theseus, Bellerophon, and Heracles are expressions of the same idea. If, again, his name as the child of the golden shower points to the splendour of his birth, so also Phœbus springs to light in Delos or in Lykia, while the gloomy prison-house in which he is born has its parallel in the sleep or death of night, which is the parent of the Delphian god. If it is the hope and the boast of Perseus that before his life's labour is done he will bring back Danaé to the home which she had left when he

was a babe,<sup>1</sup> so also Heracles meets at the close of his toils the maiden Iolê whom he had wooed and won while his life was in its morning. From the island in the eastern sea Perseus journeys through many lands to the dark home of the Graiae in the far west; but Heracles also wanders from Argos to the distant gardens of the Hesperides, Bellerophon is driven from Lykia (the land of light) and dies on the shore of the western sea, while Kephalos seeks in the Leucadian gulf the love which he had lost in Attica.<sup>2</sup> In his attack on the Gorgon maiden, Perseus is armed with the sword which slays everything on which it falls; but Apollo is also the invincible Chrysaor, and Artemis carries the unerring spear which is fatal to the guileless Procris and the less innocent Corônis or Callisto. On the golden sandals Perseus moves through the air quicker than a dream; but the golden chariot also bears Helios and Phaethon across the blue vault of the heaven, and when Achilleus tries his armour, it bears him aloft like a bird upon the wing.<sup>3</sup> After slaying

<sup>1</sup> The very name of Danaë, which is found with the first syllable lengthened in the Shield of Heracles, 229, supplies the link between the Sanskrit Dahanā and the Greek Daphnē. Danaos also comes from Egypt, as Memnon the son of Eōs comes to Ilion from Ethiopia.

<sup>2</sup> The Leucadian cape is naturally chosen by the local Athenian legend. Max Müller, Comparative Mythology, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> τῷ δὲ εὖτε πτερὰ γίγνεται, κειρε δὲ ποιμένα λαῶν. Il. xix. 386.

the sea-dragon, Perseus wins Andromeda; after killing the Minotauros, Theseus wins Ariadne. In unselfishness of character and the determination to face rather than to shrink from danger, there is no difference between Perseus and Theseus, until the latter returns from Crete, or, again, between Perseus and Bellerophon, or even Paris in the days when they called him *Alexandros*, the helper of men. Perseus is the strongest and the most active among the people in all manly exercises. So, too, none can vie with Apollo in the use of the bow, and the children of Niobē fall not less surely than the Pythian dragon. If, again, Perseus is the child of a mother of whom we know little more than the name, gentle, patient, and long-enduring, the same neutral colouring is seen in Hecabē,<sup>1</sup> the mother of the flaming Paris; in Leto, who gives birth to Phœbus, the destroyer, in Delos; and in Alcménē, from whom is born the mightiest of heroes, Heracles. The life of Perseus closes in darkness. He has slain his grandfather, and he has not the heart to remain in his ancient home; but Kephalos also cannot abide at Athens after he has unwittingly slain Procris, and both depart to die elsewhere.

Without going further, we have here no very in-

<sup>1</sup> Gladstone, *Homer &c.* vol. ii. p. 155. See also the *Gods and Heroes* p. 23.

sufficient evidence, if we sought to prove a close connection, or even a complete identity, between Perseus, Bellerophon, Theseus, Kephalos, Paris, and Apollo. If we cease to confine ourselves to a single legend, the coincidences might be indefinitely multiplied, while any other legend may be submitted to the same treatment which has just been applied to that of Perseus. If Kephalos, having won the love of Procris, is obliged to leave her for a time, Apollo in like manner is compelled to desert Corônis (x.) If Procris yields her affection to one whom she almost believes to be Kephalos, the guilt of Corônis is not many shades deeper, while both are alike smitten by the fatal spear of Artemis. In the legends of Thebes, Athens, Argos, and other cities, we find the strange, yet common, dread of parents who look on their children as their future destroyers. The Trojan Hecabê, faint and negative in character as Leto herself, dreams that she becomes the mother of a flaming fire, and Priam casts forth her child to die on the heights of Ida.<sup>1</sup> The same portion falls to the lot of Œdipus on the slopes of Kithairon, while Perseus is intrusted to the mercy of the deep sea. Nay, the legends interchange the method by which the parents seek the death of their children; for

Identity  
of the  
legends of  
Perseus,  
Bellerop-  
phon,  
Theseus,  
and other  
mythical  
beings.

<sup>1</sup> See 'Œnône,' in the Gods and Heroes.

there were tales which narrated that Œdipus was shut up in an ark which was washed ashore at Sikyon.<sup>1</sup> In every case the child grows up beautiful, brave, and strong. Like Apollo, Bellerophon, and Heracles, they are all slayers of monsters. The son of the gloomy Laios<sup>2</sup> returns to destroy the dreaded Sphinx, as Perseus slays the Gorgon and the Minotauros falls by the sword of Theseus. They have other features in common. The fears of their parents are in all cases realised. Acrisios and Laios are killed by Perseus and Œdipus, while Paris lights the torch which burns Ilion to ashes. All of them love fair maidens, and are somewhat prone to forsake them. The desertion of Ariadne, of Dêianeira, and Corônis, finds its parallel in the abandonment of Œnônê by Paris. After doing marvellous things, they return not unfrequently to the maiden whom they loved at the beginning of their career, or to the mother from whom they had parted long ago. Heracles finds Iolê by his funeral pile on Œta, while Œnônê cheers Paris in his last hour on Ida. Still more significantly, Œdipus marries Iocastê<sup>3</sup> (the connection of the

<sup>1</sup> This version of the tale calls him a son of Eurykleia, a name which belongs to the same clan with Euryganeia, Eurydikê, Eurymedâ, &c.

<sup>2</sup> In Laios we have the same neutral colouring which is common to the characters of Hecabê and Leto.

<sup>3</sup> The violet or purple colour can be traced through many Greek mythical names. Iolaos is the son of Iphicles, the twin

name with that of Iolê is manifest), and the unwitting sin thus committed becomes the starting-point of a more highly complicated history.

Wonderful, again, as is the seeming variety of action and incident in these legends, the recur-

brother of Heracles (Asp. Heracl. 74). Through Epaphos and Danaos, the line of Heracles is traced back to Io, in whom is brought out the favourite image of the bull, as a figure of Indra or the sun. (See Max Müller, Comparative Mythology, p. 57.) The names of Iasion (loved by Demêtér and slain by Zeus), of Iaso (the daughter of Asclepios), and Jason, were referred to the idea of healing (*Iasis*); but Æschylus derived Lykios, as an epithet of Apollo, from the destruction of wolves—

*Λύκει' μναξ, Λύκειος γενοῦ*

*στρατῷ δαφε—*

Theb. 145.

and thus unconsciously explained the transformation of Lycaon into a wolf. These names may therefore have had the same origin with that of Iamos, which is directly referred to the violet beds under which he was hidden by the serpents (of the night). Again, we are told that *Iámos*, as a name of Apollo, is to be referred not to *ἴδωμαι*, but to the cry *ἴη*. To the same origin is referred *Ιάκχος*, the name of Dionysos. Yet it is at the least possible, if not probable, that both these names originally expressed colour, not sound; for we are not concerned to determine the meaning assigned to such words by the Greeks, any more than we are bound to accept Aristotle's derivation of *δικαστῆς* &cēl *δικαστῆς*. Professor Max Müller has remarked that the idea of the poisoned robes of Medeia and Deianeira may have come from a fancied connection of the name Iolê with *ἰός*, poison (Comp. Myth. p. 55). He has also noted that the ideas of sound and colour are closely connected. 'Thus it is said (Rv. vi. 3, 6), the fire *cries* with light: the two Spartan Charites are called *Κλυνέα* and *Φαενέα*, i.e. Clara, clear-sounding and clear-shining. Of the rising sun, it is said in the Veda, "the child cries"' (Ib. p. 62).

rence of the same imagery, freshened by ingenious modifications, is not less remarkable.  
The imagery of these legends. If Heracles begins his career of marvels by strangling the serpents who have twined round his limbs, the youthful Apollo slays the huge snake Pytho, and Perseus smites the snaky-haired Medusa. The serpents in their turn win the victory when Eurydikē falls a victim on the banks of the Hebros, or assume a more kindly form in the legends of Iamos (vii.) and Melampus. The former they shelter in the thickets, because, as with Perseus, OEdipus, and Paris, his kinsfolk seek his death, while to Melampus, by cleansing his ears, they impart a new power, so that he may understand the voices and the song of birds.<sup>1</sup> The spotless white bull bears Europa across the waters of the sea; the glistening ram<sup>2</sup> soars through the air with the children of Nephelē, or the mist. Phaethūsa and Lampetiē drive the cattle of Helios to their pastures, and Hermes steals the herds of Phœbus before he is scarce an hour old. The cattle, in their turn, assume an unkindly aspect. The Minotauros plagues the Cretans, the Mara-

\* <sup>1</sup> Melampus, like Heracles, is wakened by the serpents. The night wakens the sun.

<sup>2</sup> The connection of the ram with the bull (Indra) is still further shown in the unfading and incorruptible golden fleece. Nor must it be forgotten that this fleece is recovered by Jason, who is, again, married to Medeia, the possessor of the fatal robe of Helios, which reappears in the legend of Dōiancira.

thonian bull ravages the fields of Attica. The former is killed by the child of the golden shower, the latter by the son of Æthra, the pure air.

The very names occurring in these tales have a significance which the Greek language itself interprets, whenever they tell us of the great heroes whose lives run so strangely in the same magic groove. Œdipus loves Iocastē, as Heracles loves Iolē: he is also the husband of Euryganeia, who spreads the light over the broad sky. The names of Phaethon, of Phaethūsa and Lampetiē, the children of Neaira, all tell their own tale. As in the names of Iolē and Iocastē, the violet colour recurs in that of the child Iamos, and Euryganeia reappears in Eurydikē, as well as in Eurymedē, the mother of Bellerophon, while slaughter or death is portended by the names of Leto and Apollo, of Perseus and Bellerophon. In the obscure mythology of Tegea, when the name of Heracles is introduced, the maiden whom he chooses is Augē, the brilliant.<sup>1</sup> She, too, like Danaē, is driven away by the terror of her father, and in the far eastern land becomes the mother of Tèlephos, who, like Paris and Œdipus, is exposed on the rough hill-side, and whose office as the bringer of light is seen again

Signifi-  
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<sup>1</sup> Paus. viii. 4, 6. Grote, History of Greece, vol. i. p. 243.

in the name of Telephassa, the mother of Europa. So, again, when the genealogy of Phthia is to be mingled with that of Elis, it is Protogeneia (the earliest dawn) who becomes the mother of Aëthlios (the toiling, struggling sun), who is the father of Endymion, the tired sun at his setting, in whose child Eurydikê we see again the morrow's light restored to its former brightness.<sup>1</sup> So, in the end, Paris is slain by the arrows which Apollo gave to Philoctetes, and under the eye of Selênê Endymion sleeps in Latmos.

Thus, in the marvellous tales which recounted the mighty deeds of Perseus and Heracles, the people of Argos saw a coherent whole—  
The legend of Perseus would, of itself, suffice for a longer epic than the Iliad. the chronicle of the great actions which distinguished the founders of their state from those of any other. Yet the tale of Perseus, and still more that of Heracles, is re-echoed in the legends of Theseus; and even more significant is the fact of their utter unconsciousness that the life of Perseus is, in all its essential

<sup>1</sup> Pausanias, v. 1, 2. Aëthlios is the husband of Calykê, the night. By some law of probability, better known to himself than to others, Pausanias chooses to marry Endymion to Asterodia, rather than to Selênê, as the mother of his fifty children. He was making a distinction without a difference. Mr. Grote gives the several versions of the myth (vol. i. p. 188, &c.); but he is mistaken in supposing that the names Aëthlios and Endymion are of late introduction, although their connection with the Olympic games undoubtedly was.

features, repeated in that of his great descendant Heracles. Heracles, again, in some of his acts, is linked with Theseus, and thus the *epos* of Argos is twisted into a complicated chain with that of Attica. These legends taken together, or even a portion of them, might well be expanded into a far longer poem than the Iliad; and there is therefore the less reason for surprise if the Iliad itself, on examination, is found to relate part only of a more extended legend, or to exhibit under a different colouring modified versions of a single story. If in the mythology of a single city we have the ideal of Perseus recurring in the tale of Heracles, there is the less reason for wonder if the Hellenic Achilleus is but the counterpart of the Trojan Alexandros, otherwise called Paris,—nay, if the character of Achilleus recurs in that of other Hellenic heroes. The Iliad, or rather, as Mr. Grote would say, the Achilléis,<sup>1</sup> sings of the wrath of the Phthiotic chieftain, who is also the child of the sea-goddess Thetis, and this wrath is followed by a time of gloomy and sullen inaction. The glorious hero, the lightning of whose countenance struck terror into his enemies, hangs up his weapons and hides his face. The sun has passed behind the veil of the storm-cloud. The expression is literally forced

The story  
of the  
Iliad is  
only part  
of a more  
extensive  
legend.

<sup>1</sup> History of Greece, vol. ii. p. 236 et seq.

from us : we cannot withhold the metaphor. But so was it with the men of Calydon while Meleagros lay sullen and angry in his secret chamber with his beautiful wife Cleopatra. So complete is the identity of the two characters, so thoroughly does it rebuke his moody anger, that the episode of Meleagros is recited at length by Phoinix, in the hope that it may appease the fury of Achilleus.<sup>1</sup> But the issue with both is the same ; and that issue is repeated in the history of Paris. Meleagros comes forth at last to the aid of his people, and Achilleus at last makes up his quarrel with Agamemnon, to avenge the death of Patroclos. All these are doomed, after their time of obstinate inaction, to an early and violent death, preceded by a brief outburst of their former splendour. That such was to be the lot of his great hero, the Homeric poet knew well ; but, unconscious as he may have been of the source of the materials of which he made such splendid use, he chose, with a poetical instinct never surpassed, to close his tale when Achilleus grants the prayer of Priam and yields to him the body of his dead son Hector. The struggle has been long and gloomy ; but the hero who left his home in the full flush of radiant manhood, must at the last exhibit the nobleness of his nature, even if its

<sup>1</sup> Iliad, ix. 529-599.

splendour has been somewhat marred by the wayward stubbornness which rejected alike all comfort and all counsel. The storm-cloud has passed away, and the beaten vapours fly from the face of the triumphant sun.

Nor are resemblances of detail wanting to show that Eastern and Western legends have in the Iliad been blended together. Achilleus is wrathful because Agamemnon, the king, has taken from him the fair maiden Brisēis, whom he won with his bow and his spear. Paris rests sullenly on his luxurious couches because he will not, at the bidding of his father and his kinsfolk, give up Helen, whom he had brought away from Argos. And if Achilleus comes forth from his tent to slay Hector, while the name of Paris is made a by-word and a reproach, yet it is from Paris, aided by Apollo, that Achilleus receives his death-wound.

Mingling  
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Such a blending of the mythology of different cities or countries would necessarily issue in a highly complicated story. But it is obvious, at the same time, that no historical inferences can be drawn from the mere fact of such a complication. Rightly convinced that the tale of Troy, with its marvellously vivid details and astonishing incidents, must have some foundation, Dr. Thirlwall is disposed to refer it to some great expedition in which the

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chieftains of Western Hellas were combined against an Asiatic power ruling in Ilion.<sup>1</sup> The evidence of such a fact may be found in isolated statements contained in the Iliad, but scarcely in the plot of the story. If it may be assumed from the form of the prophecy of Poseidon that princes claiming descent from Ænēas ruled in the poet's time in the Troad,<sup>2</sup> no light is thrown by it on the existence of that chief or on the reality of the Trojan war. The ruins of Tiryns attest the

<sup>1</sup> History of Greece, ch. v. Dr. Thirlwall is struck by the contrast of the futile efforts of Agamemnon and his host with the success of Heracles in his attack on Troy during the reign of Laomedon. He makes some plausible historical conjectures to account for this difference. But the tale explains itself. Heracles is a transformation of the invincible sun-god; and his might therefore beats down every enemy. Agamemnon and his host represent Gunnar and his followers in the Northern epic; and these are of kin to the powers of darkness. They can do nothing, therefore, in spite of their numbers, until aided by Achilleus, the sunlike hero. Such, at least, is the burden of the Achilléis. The interpolated Iliad was the result of a patriotic feeling struggling against the laws of mythical speech. Dr. Thirlwall sees clearly that the abduction of Helen may have been 'a theme for poetry originally independent of the Trojan war,' and he rightly insists that the tale of the war, 'even if unfounded, must still have had some adequate occasion and motive.' This is indisputable: but hypotheses connecting it with Greek colonies in Asia explain nothing; the comparison of Greek legends among themselves and with other systems of mythology explains all.

<sup>2</sup> Iliad, xx. 307-8. It is, after all, the merest inference. See Grote, History of Greece, vol. i. p. 428.

truthfulness of Homeric description ; the walls of Mykēnæ bear out the statement that it was once the seat of a dynasty which ruled over many islands and all Argos ; but archæological evidence tells us nothing of Perseids or of Pelopids.

But if we can trace this recurrence of the same ideal in different heroes, and of the same imagery in the recital of their adventures, in Hellenic mythology alone, the marvel is intensified a thousandfold when we compare this mythology with the ancient legends of Northern Europe or of the far-distant East. There is scarcely an incident in the lives of the great Greek heroes which cannot be traced out in the wide field of Teutonic or Scandinavian tradition ; and the complicated action of the Iliad, or rather of the whole legend of which the Iliad forms a part, is reproduced in the Eddas and the lays of the Volsungs and the Nibelungs. If the Greek tales tell us of serpent-slayers and the destroyers of noxious monsters, the legends of the ice-bound North also sing of heroes who slay the dragons that lie coiled round sleeping maidens. If the former recite the labours of Heracles and speak of the bondage of Apollo, Sifrit and Sigurdr are not less doomed to a life of labour for others, not for themselves. If Heracles alone can rescue Hesionê from a like doom with Andromeda, or bring back Alkêtis from the land of Hades, it is

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Sigurdr only who can slay the serpent Fafnir, and Ragnar Lodbrog alone who can deliver Thora from the dragon's grasp.<sup>1</sup> If, at the end of his course, Heracles once more sees his early love—if Œnôné comes again to Paris in his death hour—so Brenhyldr lies down to die with Sigurdr who had forsaken her. If Achilleus and Baldr can only be wounded on a single spot, Isfendiyar, in the Persian epic, can only be killed by the thorn thrown into his eye by Rustem. If Paris forsakes Œnôné, and Theseus leaves Ariadne mourning on the barren shore, so also Sigurdr deserts Brenhyldr, and Gudrun to him supplies the place of Aiglê or of Helen. If the tale of Perseus is repeated in the career of Heracles, the legend of Ragnar Lodbrog is also a mere echo of the nobler story which told of the sunbright Sigurdr. It is scarcely necessary to enter into more minute detail. How completely the whole Northern mythology of Europe is founded on the great tragedy of Nature has been shown, in a way which leaves nothing to be desired, by Professor Max Müller and Mr. Dasent.<sup>2</sup> The harmony of this Northern mythology with that of Homer and the Hellenic legends generally I have endeavoured to point out in the

<sup>1</sup> Gods and Heroes, Introduction, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> Max Müller, Comparative Mythology, in Oxford Essays for 1856, p. 66, &c. Dasent, Popular Tales from the Norse, Introduction.

introduction to the ‘Tales of the Gods and Heroes.’

But at this point we encounter a difficulty which, if not removed, must prove fatal to the method which the science of Comparative Mythology applies to the legends of the East and West. If that science has guided us to any measure of the truth, it has taught us something not merely of the growth of tales which recount the actions of deified heroes, but of the conceptions from which sprang the highest deities of Olympus—Artemis, Démêtér, Apollo, and Zeus himself. It has identified Phœbus with Helios, Heracles, Perseus, Artemis. It has traced the several aspects of his character through the phases presented in the legends of Theseus, Kephalos, Daphnê, Endymion, Bellérophon, and Meleagros. It has taught us that he is the child of Zeus and Leto, while the maiden Persephonê is sprung from Zeus and Démêtér. It tells us of Ouranos looking down on Gaia, and of Gaia returning the love of Ouranos by her unbounded fertility. It speaks of the toiling sun, visiting all the regions of the earth as he ascends or goes down the slope of heaven, and of earth as yielding to him her fruits, wherever his light may exercise its beneficent power. It speaks of Zeus as the son or the husband of Gaia, and of the tears which fell in raindrops

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from the sky when he mourned for the death of his son Sarpedon. It seems to tell us, then, of a mythological or religious system which, simple at the first, became at the last excessively complicated, and, further, that this system was the result not of philosophical generalisations, but of the consciousness of an exuberant life which was extended from man to every object which he beheld in the visible creation. It seems to show that once upon a time, while the ancestors of European nations and tribes were still comparatively united, men had uttered as the simple phrases of every-day speech what became afterwards the groundwork of elaborate religious systems—that once upon a time they spoke of the dawn coming from the chambers of the night, while the night herself was struggling with the birth of the brilliant sun—that the new-born sun saw, and loved, and pursued the dawn, which vanished at his touch. It seems to teach us that out of such phrases, which, slightly varied, were expanded into the tales of Kephalos and Procris, of Coronis and Apollo, grew finally the more definite personalities of Zeus and Phœbus, of Leto and Daphnē, of Artemis and Heracles. Hence whatever in the later Greek religious system there was of direct anthropomorphism or of a fetiche nature-worship would be the result of later thought and of attempts to arrive at philosophical abstractions,

and not the maimed and distorted relics of a higher knowledge once possessed but now only not forgotten.

If the theory which makes the growth of Greek mythology from the first a philosophical process can be established, then the results of comparative mythology must be abandoned as of no value, and we must be content to look on the points of resemblance between Greek, Teutonic, Scandinavian, and Eastern mythology, as a problem utterly beyond our powers to solve or even to grapple with. In either case it is a question of evidence. In his studies on Homer and the Homeric age, Mr. Gladstone sought to bring together the evidence that the Greek theogony was a distortion of primitive dogmatic revelation—that Zeus, Hades, and Poseidon stood in place of the Christian Trinity, while Leto represented the mother of the Redeemer, whose attributes are divided between Apollo and Athénê. The objections which seem to be conclusive against the hypothesis of an original dogmatic revelation, of such a kind at least as that of which Mr. Gladstone speaks, have been considered already;<sup>1</sup> and it is perhaps unnecessary to reply at greater length to a theory which, however ingenious and however forcibly urged, has nothing but its own plausibility to

Mr. Gladstone's theory of Greek mythology as the corruption of an original dogmatic revelation.

<sup>1</sup> Tales of the Gods and Heroes, Introduction, pp. 14–40.

appeal to for acceptance. Dr. Döllinger's position<sup>1</sup> lies open to no charges of fanciful extravagance; it needs, therefore, to be the more carefully examined, as professing to be a legitimate deduction from the state of religion, or rather of religious *cultus*, among the Greeks in historical times. This state was, in the opinion of Dr. Döllinger, the result of an attempt to reduce a variety of conflicting systems and notions into one harmonious whole. In it were mingled the mysticism of Egypt and the orgiastic ritualism of the East, with the rude nature-worship of the older and less civilised ages; and his purpose is to trace the several ideas so amalgamated to their original sources. With this view he is obliged to assume that in his primæval innocence man was enabled 'to conceive of the Divinity as a pure, spiritual, supernatural, and infinite being, distinct from the world and exalted above it.' The loss of this conception and the yearning for something in its place led to the deification of material nature, which 'unfolded herself to man's nature as a boundless demesne, wherein was confined an unfathomable plenitude of powers, incommensurable and incalculable, and of energies not to be overcome.' With this was developed a sympathy for naturalism, 'and thus

<sup>1</sup> The Gentile and the Jew in the Courts of the Temple of Christ, book ii.

man, deeper and deeper in the spells of his enchantress, and drawn downwards by their weight, had his moral consciousness overcast in proportion, and gave the fuller rein to impulses which were merely physical.<sup>1</sup> This deification of natural powers led, as Dr. Döllinger believes, first of all to the worship of the elements—of ether as the vault of heaven, of the earth as its opposite; of fire as the warming and nourishing, the consuming and destroying power; of water as the element of moisture separated from that of earth. To this succeeded astrolatry in the East, and geolatry in the West, where the idea of the earth as a susceptible and productive agent led to the distinction of male and female divinities. But the actual Greek religion of the heroic and later ages was a blending of the several notions derived from supplanted races, Leleges and Carians, Thracians and Pelasgi, together with importations from Asia and Egypt.<sup>2</sup> Thus Gaia and Helios, Zeus and Hérê, belong to the Pelasgic stock, while Poseidon was introduced by Carian and Phœnician visitors of the coasts of Hellas.<sup>3</sup> Pallas Athénê was also Pelasgian, as a goddess of nature and the elements. Apollo, likewise Pelasgian, ‘has so many features in common with Athénê, that in many respects

<sup>1</sup> The Gentile and the Jew in the Courts of the Temple of Christ, vol. i. p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 80.

one might call him an Athénê of the male species.' Artemis was in continental Greece Pelasgian, while at Ephesus she exhibits an Asiatic character and becomes 'a sort of pantheistic deity.' From the Pelasgi also came Hestia, Hermes, and Aphrodité; but Ares was the god of the Thracian race, 'which, having penetrated into Boeotia and the Peloponnese, took his worship along with them.' Of the rest Démétér was Pelasic, Hephaistos came from the Thracians of Lemnos, and Dionysos from the more distant East; while Hades was almost an afterthought, not much worshipped, and not greatly cared for by the people.<sup>1</sup>

The picture drawn by Dr. Döllinger of the great Olympian deities may in all its particulars be strictly true. It is possible or probable that ideas utterly foreign to the Greek mind may have been imported from Phrygia, Phœnicia, or Egypt, and that the worship so developed may have embodied philosophical conceptions of nature and of the powers at work in it. But the question which calls for an answer cannot be determined by the most masterly portraiture of the great gods of Olympus; and Dr. Döllinger's hypothesis does not enable us to answer it. It starts on an assumption for which we have no evidence; and all the evidence

This theory starts on an assumption for which there is no evidence.

<sup>1</sup> The Gentile and the Jew in the Courts of the Temple of Christ, vol. i. p. 93.

that is furnished by the book of Genesis, and still more all that is furnished by the study of language, militates against the idea that man started originally with a conception of God ‘as a pure, spiritual, supernatural, and infinite being, distinct from the world and exalted above it.’ How soon he might have risen to this conception, had his lot been different from what it has been, it is impossible to say; but if we are to argue simply from statements before us, we may affirm that men were, from the first, conscious of the existence of a Being more powerful than themselves, whom they were bound to obey, but we can scarcely maintain more. This sense of duty, and still more the sense of shame following on a violation of it, would show that the groundwork of that relation was the goodness and justice of the Being with whom they had to do. But in this conviction there was nothing to determine their ideas on the objects and phenomena of the natural world. Feeling a conscious life in himself, man would, until corrected by experience, attribute the same conscious life to everything that he saw or felt. The sun and moon, the cloud and the wind, would be living beings not less than himself; but he could not embody them in anthropomorphic forms, so long as the names by which he spoke of them retained their original meanings. Still less could he start with a primary worship of the elements

until he had learnt to regard as abstractions the objects or powers, which, it would seem, he looked upon only as living beings. Three ways lay before him. He might, like Abraham in the old Arabian legend,<sup>1</sup> be led by the rising and setting of the sun and stars to the conviction that they were simply passive instruments in the hands of an almighty and a righteous God; or he might, as he forgot his old language, invest with an anthropomorphic life the deities with which he peopled the whole visible creation; or, lastly, he might bow down crushed beneath the dead weight of nature, and yield himself a living slave to a loathsome and degrading fetishism. Of these three courses the first was chosen only by the Hebrew people, and even by them feebly and fitfully; the second was followed by the tribes of the Hellenic stock; the third has been rejected by every portion of the great Aryan family of nations. These, as they journeyed from their ancient home, carried with them the old language and the old morality; but the measure in which they forgot the meaning of proper names would determine the extent to which new gods should be called into existence. But this developement, as the result, primarily, of a corruption of language, would not be, in the strictest sense, a religion, and the moral sense of the worshipper would not

<sup>1</sup> Milman, History of the Jews, book i.

be darkened in proportion to the number of the gods whom he venerated. Dr. Döllinger's hypothesis, not less than the theory of Mr. Gladstone, would require a continually increasing degradation; but a comparison of the Homeric and Hesiodic poems is conclusive against it. There is no evidence that the Greeks of the seventh or sixth centuries before the Christian era had their 'moral consciousness more overcast' than the Greeks of the tenth or twelfth; there is much to lead us to the contrary conclusion.

But Dr. Döllinger's theory requires him to deal with Carians, Leleges, and Pelasgi; and the chain of his argument becomes weakest where it should have the greatest strength. His speculations may be masterly, and his conclusions forcible, but we lack the means of determining their truth. Mr. Grote, in his 'History of Greece,' hesitates to speak of any events as historical facts before the first recorded Olympiad, i. e. 776 B.C. Sir Cornewall Lewis holds the researches of scholars respecting the primitive history of the Hellenic or Italian tribes as 'not less unreal than the speculations concerning judicial astrology or the discovery of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life.'<sup>1</sup> Dr. Döllinger must have evidence, not accessible to either, to warrant the assertion that the chief seats of the Pelasgians were Arcadia,

Historical speculations of Dr. Döllinger.

<sup>1</sup> Credibility of Early Roman History, vol. i. p. 297.

Argolis, and Perrhaibia, and that the immigration of the Doric and Æolic races took place precisely in the year 1104 b.c.<sup>1</sup>

His analysis thus leaves the Greek mythology, as he found it, a strange and perplexing riddle.

*They leave the real difficulties of Greek mythology unexplained.* It omits all notice of the marvellous likeness between Greek and Scandinavian legends; it does not even attempt to explain why each Greek god should have certain special attributes and not others.

It does not tell us why Heracles and Perseus and Bellerophon and Apollo should all be made to serve creatures meaner and weaker than themselves—why Heracles and Zeus should have a thousand earthly loves, and Artemis and Athénê none. Still less does it explain why the character of Heracles and Hermes should sometimes assume a comic aspect, which is never allowed to weaken the serious majesty of Athénê, or Démêtér, or Apollo.

*Greek mythology, of itself, seems to point out the means of solving them.* But, without reference to the systems of other nations, the mythology of the Greeks *seems* of itself to point out the track which must be followed if we seek to solve the problem of its birth. It is impossible to read the legends of Heracles and Demeter, of Theseus, Cadmus, Perseus, and other great mythical personages, without feeling that a few simple

<sup>1</sup> Jew and Gentile &c. vol. i. pp. 68, 74.

phrases might well have supplied the germ for the most complicated of these traditions. Every incident in the myth of the Eleusinian Démêtér may be accounted for, if only men once said (with the conviction that the things of which they spoke had a conscious life), ‘The earth mourns for the dead summer. The summer lies shut up in the prison of Hades, the unseen ;’—or, as in the language of the Norseman, ‘She sleeps in the land of the Niflungs, the cold mists, guarded by the serpent Fafnir.’ The tale of Endymion seems to speak for itself: ‘The moon comes to gaze on her beloved, the sun, as he lies down to sleep in the evening.’ In the story of Niobê we seem to see the sun in his scorching power, consuming those who dare to face his dazzling brightness; in that of Orpheus we seem to hear his lamentation for the beautiful evening which has been stung by the serpent of the night, and which he brings back to life only to lose her at the gates of day. In the myth of Europa we have the journey of the sun from the far East to the Western land, until Tèlephassa, the far-shining, sinks down wearied on the Thessalian plain. Still more transparent appear the tales of Kephalos and Daphnê. Procris, even in the mouth of the Greek, is still the child of Hersê, the dew, Éôs is still the morning, Kephalos still the head of the bright sun. In Daphnê we seem to behold

the dawn flying from her lover, and shrinking before his splendour. In the Homeric hymn, Leto, the night, dark and still as death, promises that Phœbus shall long abide in Delos, the bright land. Doubtless she made the same promise to the Lykians ; but the sun cannot tarry, and he hastens westward to slay the serpent of darkness. In Heracles we see the sun in other guise, toiling and suffering, loving and beloved wherever he goes, seeking to benefit the sons of men, yet sometimes harming them in the exuberance of his boisterous strength. In the tale of Althæa, we read the sentence that the bright sun must die when the torch of day is burnt out. In Phaethon we seem to see the plague of drought which made men say, ‘Surely another, who cannot guide his horses, is driving the chariot of the sun.’ The beautiful herds, which the bright and glistening daughters of early morning feed in the pastures of Thrinakia, seem to tell us of the violet-coloured clouds which the dawn spreads over the fields of the blue sky. In Bellerophon, as in Perseus, Theseus, and Heracles, we find again the burden laid on the sun who must toil for others, although the forms of that toil may vary. Perseus goes to the dwelling of the Graiæ, as men might have said, ‘The sun has departed to the land of the twilight.’ When Perseus slays Medusa, the sun has killed the night in its solemn

and deathlike beauty; while the wild pursuit of the immortal Gorgons seems to be the chase of Darkness after the bright sun, who, with his golden sandals, just escapes their grasp as he soars into the peaceful morning sky, the Hyperborean gardens, which sorrow, strife, and death can never enter. In the death of Acrisios we have the old tale which comes up in many another legend, where Œdipus mourns that he has unwittingly slain his father, and the maiden Iolê, like Œnônenê, dies on the funeral pile of Heracles.

If the Greek legends by themselves thus exhibit, or seem to exhibit, their ancient framework, the Norse tradition points not less unmistakably in the same direction. If any now can be found to assert that the one set of legends were copied from the other, he not only maintains a theory which, in Mr. Dasent's words, hangs on a single thread,<sup>1</sup> but he displays a credulity which need not shrink from the avowal that the whole of the 'Arabian Nights' Entertainments' is a genuine and veracious history. The wildest

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direction.

<sup>1</sup> Popular Tales from the Norse, Introduction, p. xlivi. In the chapter on Diffusion of Myths, Mr. Dasent has completely disposed of all charges of copying, in every form in which such objections can be urged. Some of the most remarkable incidents of Greek mythology are to be found in the folk-lore of English counties. The story of the fatal brand of Meleagros survives in the traditional tales of North Devon. See Mr. Tugwell's North Devon Scenery Book.

prejudice can scarcely shelter itself behind these treacherous and crumbling barriers, although it may urge that, whether in Teutonic or Greek mythology, the dawn, the evening, and the night, the toiling and capricious sun, are already persons with human forms and a fixed local habitation. But even this position would be greatly strained. Mr. Grote himself allows that what he terms allegory is one of the constituent elements of Greek mythology.<sup>1</sup> But, even if we admit the objection in its full force, we lack but a single link to complete the chain of evidence and turn an overwhelming probability into fact. Have we any records of that old time in which men spoke as Greek and Norse myths seem to tell us that they did? Have we any actual relics of that speech in which men talked of Daphnē as chased by Phœbus, even while Daphnē was still the common name of the dawn, and Phœbus meant still simply the sun?

The Vedic hymns of the Mantra period stand forth to give us the answer, but they do so only to exhibit a fresh marvel. While they show to us the speech which was afterwards petrified into the forms of Greek mythology, they point to a still earlier time, of which no record has come down, and of which we can have no further evidence than that which is furnished by the laws which determine the

The missing link is supplied in the older Vedic poems.

<sup>1</sup> History of Greece, vol. i. p. 2.

growth of language. Even in the Mantra period, the earliest in all Sanskrit, and therefore (as exhibiting the earliest form of thought) the earliest in all human literature,<sup>1</sup> the whole grammar is definitely fixed, and religious belief has assumed the character of a creed. And if in them man has not lived long enough to trace analogies and arrive at some idea of an order of nature, he has grown into the strongest conviction that behind all the forms which come before his eyes there is a Being, unseen and all-powerful, whose bidding is done throughout the wide creation, and to whom men may draw nigh as children to a father.

When, therefore, in these hymns, Kephalos, Procris, Hermes, Daphnē stand forth as simple names for the sun, the dew, the wind, and the dawn, each recognised as such, yet each endowed with the most perfect consciousness, we feel that the great riddle of mythology is solved, and that we no longer lack the key which shall disclose its most hidden treasures. When we hear the people saying, ‘Our friend the sun is dead. Will he rise? Will the dawn come back again?’ we see the death of Heracles or Kephalos and the weary waiting while Leto struggles with the birth of Phœbus. When on the return of day we hear the cry—

The key  
to all  
Aryan  
mythology.

<sup>1</sup> Max Müller, History of Sanskrit Literature, pp. 528, 557.

'Rise! our life, our spirit is come back, the darkness is gone, the light approaches,'—we are carried at once to the Homeric hymn, and we hear the joyous shout of all the gods when Phœbus springs to life and light in Delos.<sup>1</sup> The tale of Urvasi and Purûravas<sup>2</sup> (these are still the morning and the sun) is the tale of Orpheus and Eurydikê. Purûravas, in his dreary search, hears the voice of Urvasi saying, 'I am gone like the first of the dawns. I am hard to be caught like the wind.' Yet she will come back to him at the close of the night, and a son, bright and beaming, shall be born to them. Varuna is still the wide heaven, the god 'who can be seen by all,' the lord of the whole earth; but in him we recognise at once the Greek Ouranos, who looks lovingly on Gaia from his throne in the sky. Yet more we read the praises of Indra, and his great exploit is that

'He has struck the daughter of Dyaus [Zeus], a woman difficult to vanquish.'

'Yes, even the daughter of Dyaus, the mag-

<sup>1</sup> ἐκ δ' ἔθορε πρὸ φόωσδε· θεαὶ δ' ὀλόλυκαν ἀπαταῖ.

Hymn. Apoll. 119.

<sup>2</sup> In the Essay on Comparative Mythology, Professor Max Müller has given not only the older forms of this myth, but a minute analysis of the play of Kalidâsa on this subject. This poem is very instructive, as showing that the character of the Homeric Achilleus adheres as closely to the original idea as do those of Urvasi and Purûravas in the later poetry of Kalidâsa.

nified, the Dawn, thou, O Indra, a great hero, hast ground to pieces.

‘The Dawn rushed off from her crushed car, fearing that Indra, the bull, might strike her. .

‘This her car lay there well ground to pieces : she went far away.’

The treatment is rude, but we have here not merely the whole tale of Daphnê, but the germ of that of Europa borne by the same bull across the sea. More commonly, however, the dawn is spoken of as bright, fair, and loving, the joy of all who behold her.

‘She shines upon us like a young wife, rousing every living being to go to his work.

‘She rose up, spreading far and wide [Euryganeia, Eurydikê], and moving towards every one. She grew in brightness, wearing her brilliant garment. The mother of the cows [the morning clouds, the Homeric herds of the sun], the leader of the days, she shone gold-coloured, lovely to behold.

‘She, the fortunate, who brings the eye of the god [Kephalos], who leads the white and lovely steed (of the sun), the Dawn was seen revealed by her rays ; with brilliant treasures she follows every one.

‘Shine for us with thy best rays, thou bright Dawn, thou who lengthenest our life, thou the love of all, who givest us food, who givest us wealth in cows, horses, and chariots.

'Thou, daughter of the sky [Dyaus, Zeus], thou high-born Dawn, give us riches high and wide.'<sup>1</sup>

We can but wonder at the marvellous exuberance of language, almost every expression of which may manifestly serve as the germ of a mythical tale. <sup>Germ of mythical tales.</sup> We say, 'The fire burns, the wood crackles and smokes.' They said,

'Neighing like a horse that is greedy for food, it steps ~~out~~ from the strong prison; then the wind blows after his blast; thy path, O Agni [Ignis], is dark at once.'

The Latin carried with him the name to little purpose. In the hands of the Greek, similar <sup>Truthfulness of mythical description.</sup> phrases on the searching breath of the wind grew up into the legend of Hermes. Nor can it be said that the instinct of the Greek was less true than that of the old Aryan poet to the sights of the natural world. If we recur with feelings of undiminished pleasure to the touching truthfulness of the language which tells of the Dawn as the bright being whom age cannot touch although she makes men old, who thinks of the dwellings of men and shines on the small and great, we feel also that the Homeric poet, even while he spoke of a god in human form born in Delos, was not less true to the original character of the being of whom he sang. He thought of the sun rising in

<sup>1</sup> Max Müller, History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 551.

a cloudless heaven, and he told how the nymphs bathed him in pure water and wrapped him in a spotless robe.<sup>1</sup> But while they swathed him in golden bands, the great sword was not yet belted to his side,<sup>2</sup> for thus far he showed to men only his beneficent brightness. Still, although the stress of the hymn lies wholly on the promise of Leto that her child shall have his chief home in Delos, the poet feels that Delos alone can never be his home, and so he sang how Apollo went from island to island, watching the ways and works of men—how he loved the tall sea-cliffs and every jutting headland and the rivers which hasten to the broad sea, even though he came back with ever-fresh delight to his native Delos.<sup>3</sup>

Thus the great mystery of Greek as of other

<sup>2</sup> πέρι δὲ χρύσεον στρόφον ἦκαν·  
οὐδὲ δρ' Ἀπόλλωνα χρυσόρα θήσατο μῆτηρ. Ib. 122.

<sup>3</sup> Αὐτὸς δ', αργυρόποτε, ἄναξ, ἑκατηβόλος<sup>1</sup> Απολλον,  
ἄλλοτε μέν τ' ἐπὶ Κύνθου ἐβήσαο παικαλδεντος,  
ἄλλοτε δ' αὐτῆσσι τε καὶ ἀνέρας ἡλάσκαζε.

πᾶσαι δὲ σκοτιαὶ τε φίλαι καὶ πρώονες ἄκροι  
ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων, ποταμοί οὐδὲ ἀλαδε προρέοντες.

ἀλλὰ σὺ Δῆλφ, Φοῖβε, μάλιστ' ἐπιτέρπεαι θηρ.

mythology is dispelled like mist from the mountain side at the rising of the sun. All that is beautiful in it is invested with a purer radiance ; while much, if not all, that is gross and coarse in it, is refined, or else its grossness is traced to an origin which reflects no disgrace on those who framed or handed down the tale. Thus, with the key-note ringing in our ears, we can catch at once every strain that belongs to the ancient harmony, although it may be heard amid the din of many discordant voices. The groundwork of Greek mythology was the ordinary speech which told of the interchange of day and night, of summer and winter ; but into the superstructure there may have been introduced any amount of local or personal detail, any number of ideas and notions imported from foreign philosophical or religious systems. The extent of such importations is probably far less than is generally imagined ; but, however this may be, the original matter may still be traced, even where it exists only in isolated fragments. The bull which bears Europa away from Cadmos (Kedem, the East)<sup>1</sup> is the same from which the dawn flies in the Vedic hymn. It is seen again as the Minotauros, the

<sup>1</sup> Niebuhr (in his *Lectures on Ancient History*, vol. i. p. 239) sees that the tale points to the East; but from the words Cadmus, and Banna as occurring in the Boeotian dialect only, he is perfectly convinced of the 'Phœnician origin of Thebes.'

offspring of Pasiphaë (who gives light to all), and reappears still further disguised in the Marathonian bull. The robe with which Medeia poisons the daughter of Creon was a gift from Helios, the burning sun, and is seen again as the poisoned robe which Déianeira sends to the absent Heracles—as the deadly arrow by which Philoctetes mortally wounds the Trojan Paris—as the golden fleece taken from the ram which bears away the children of (Nephelē) the mist—as the sword which Ægeus leaves under the stone for Theseus the son of Æthra, the pure air—as the spear of Artemis which never misses its mark—as the sword of Perseus which slays all on whom it may fall—as the unerring weapons of Meleagros—as the fatal lance which Achilleus alone can wield. The serpents of night or of winter occur in almost every tale, under aspects friendly or unkind. The dragon sleeps coiled round Brenhyldr or Aslauga, as the snakes seek to strangle the infant Heracles or sting the beautiful Eurydikē. But in Southern climes night has its softer moods; and the serpents, in the dim twilight of morning, place Iamos on the violet beds, or open the ears of Melampus to the song of the early birds. If the power of the sun's rays is set forth under such different forms, their beauty is signified by the golden locks of Phœbus over which no razor has ever passed,<sup>1</sup> by

<sup>1</sup> Φοῖβος ἀκερσεκόμης (Il. xx. 39), a significant epithet which,

the flowing hair which streams from the head of Kephalos and falls over the shoulders of Perseus and Bellerophon. They serve also sometimes as a sort of Palladium, and the shearing of the single golden lock which grew on the top of his head leaves Nisos, the Megarian king, powerless as the shorn Samson in the arms of the Philistines. In many of the legends these images are mingled together, or recur under modified forms. In the tale of Althæa, there is not only the torch of day which measures the life of Meleagros, but the weapons of the chieftain, which no enemy may withstand. In that of Bellerophon, there are the same invincible weapons, while the horrible Chimæra answers to the boar of Calydon, or to that of Erymanthos, which fell by the arm of Heracles.

The name of Heracles brings us to the strange border-ground in which the character of some of the gods assumes a jovial or even a comic aspect. The language of the Vedic hymns at once shows why this should be the portion of some among the greater gods, and not of others. Phœbus, Athénê, and Orpheus, as representing the pure effulgence of the sun, Hestia as the unsullied fire upon the hearth, Démêtér as

of itself, would suffice to give birth to such a legend as that of Nisos and Skylla. The shearing of the locks of the sun must be followed by darkness and ruin.

the nourishing mother of all living things, Poseidon as the lord of the mysterious sea, Hades and Persephonê as rulers of the unseen land, pass under no conditions which may detract from their purity or their majesty. It was far otherwise with Ouranos or Zeus, the heaven and the sky, whose relations to the earth, when described under anthropomorphic forms, exhibit a mere unbounded license and its results of envy, jealousy, and strife in the home of the gods. If Heracles was in the outset simply the toiling and wandering sun, he, like the sun, must have his children in every land, and the series of his adventures must, from time to time, exhibit an uncouth and grotesque character.<sup>1</sup> Wherever he

Bur-  
lesque in  
the cha-  
racter of  
Heracles.

<sup>1</sup> This aspect of the myth is well illustrated by the tale of Heracles and Echidna (Herod. iv. 9). This uncouth story has, however, not a single feature peculiar to itself. Heracles sleeps, and his herds are stolen. Like Apollo, in the hymn to Hermes, he must go in search of them. He comes into a gloomy land, like Perseus into the land of the Graiae, and there in the dusk he sees a creature with something of the beauty and ghastliness of Medusa. For a time she will not let him depart. The sun must abide awhile in the dark cave of night after his setting. In the morning she restores the herds; or, in other words, she yields them to Phaethûsa and Lampetiê, the children of Neaira. The violet clouds (Iolê) again go before Heracles. But with Echidna he leaves, as Ægeus left with Æthra, weapons not to be yielded up except to one who can wield them like himself. The legends of Theseus and Perseus are mingled in the dynastic myth which Herodotus ascribes to the Scythian tribes.

goes, he has his loves and his toils; but his tasks frequently need nothing but sheer brute strength for their fulfilment, and mere force suggests the idea of moral weakness or absence of mental vigour. Hence he is the careless slave of beings weaker than himself, and like a burly slave he seeks solace for his hard lot in wine and riotous laughter] and song.<sup>1</sup> The cry of mourning is

<sup>1</sup> In short, Heracles, so regarded, is a mere giant, exulting in his strength like Briareos, and seeking to make of life one long holiday. The idea of Samson was certainly not derived from the Greeks; yet his character, as drawn by Dr. Stanley, agrees in every feature with that of Heracles, as exhibited in the Alkēstis of Euripides and in the stories of his many loves. While claiming for Samson, somewhat mysteriously, a position which 'most nearly resembles that of the founder of a monastic order,' he speaks of him as 'the most frolicsome, irregular, uncultivated creature that the nation ever produced. Not only was celibacy no part of his Nazarite obligations, but not even ordinary purity of life. He was full of the spirits and the pranks, no less than of the strength, of a giant. His name, which Josephus interprets in the sense of "strong," was still more characteristic. He was "the sunny,"—the bright and beaming, though wayward, likeness of the great luminary whom the Hebrews delighted to compare to a "giant rejoicing to run his course," "a bridegroom coming forth out of his chamber." Nothing can disturb his radiant good-humour. His most valiant, his most cruel actions, are done with a smile on his face and a jest in his mouth' (Lectures on the Jewish Church, p. 368). This character is the more remarkable, as the sense of the comic was wholly wanting in the Jews as a people. They spoke of a laugh of scorn and hatred: the laughter of mere mirth seems to have been unknown to them, as it was little known to the Romans. Like

hushed at his coming into the house of Admétos; but, although he knows that the chieftain has lost some one whom he dearly loved, he sees in the fact no reason whatever why he should lose his dinner. So he jokes on with the slave who stands aghast at the strength of his appetite, and when he learns the true cause for the sorrow of his host, he assures him with a careless smile that his brawny arm will be more than a match for Thánatos, the power of death; and, lastly, when he brings back Alkéstis in disguise, he has a keen relish for the unwillingness which Admétos exhibits to be on with the new love before he is off with the old, while admitting that the likeness to his lost wife is very surprising.

The broad burlesque so introduced may be dismissed as the heightened colouring added by later poets; but the Homeric hymn to Hermes Humour  
of the  
hymn to  
Hermes. betrays an enjoyment of humour, if not so coarse, yet fully as great as that which is shown by Euripides. The reason is plain. In the old speech of which the Vedic songs have preserved to us the fragments, Hermes was the hound of the gods, the wind, as Agni (*Ignis*) is the fire.<sup>1</sup> In this form of a hound he stands by

Phœbus, Samson is *ἀκερσεκόμης*; and when his locks are shorn, he incurs the ruin which falls to the lot of Nisos

<sup>1</sup> ‘An unexpected light has been thrown on many an enigmatical form in the Hellenic mythology by recent researches regard-

the side of Artemis,<sup>1</sup> or goes forth to drive the cattle of the sun to their pastures. But, like the fire, which at its first kindling steps out with the strength of a horse from its prison, the wind may freshen to a gale before it be an hour old, and sweep before it the mighty clouds big with the rain that is to refresh the earth. Where it cannot throw down, it can penetrate. It pries unseen into holes and crannies, it sweeps round dark corners, it plunges into glens and caves; and when the folk come out to see the mischief that it has done, they hear its mocking laughter as it hastens on its way. These few phrases lay bare the whole framework of the Homeric legend, and account for the not ill-natured slyness and love of practical jokes which enter into the character of Hermes.<sup>2</sup>

ing the earlier divinities of India. The hoary mysterious forms of the Erinnies are no Hellenic invention: they were immigrants along with the oldest settlers from the East. The divine greyhound Saramā, who guards for the lord of heaven the golden herd of stars and sunbeams, and for him collects the nourishing rain-clouds of heaven to the milking, and who, moreover, faithfully conducts the pious dead into the world of the blessed, becomes, in the hands of the Greeks, the son of Saramā, Sarameyas, or Hermeias.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Mommsen, in this passage (*History of Rome*, vol. i. p. 18), is at least arguing from evidence. His ground is less sure when he suggests (p. 80) that the non-burgesses resident in Rome *appear* to have paid the king a tax for protection, and then refers subsequently to such payment as a fact (p. 94).

<sup>1</sup> Gods and Heroes, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> Horace, Odes, i. 10.

The babe leaves the cradle before he is an hour old. The breath of the breeze is soft and harmonious at first, as the sounds which he summons from his tortoise lyre.<sup>1</sup> But his strength grows rapidly;<sup>2</sup> with mighty strides he hastens from the heights of Kyllénê, until he drives from their pastures the cattle of Apollo, obliterating the foot-tracks after the fashion of the autumn winds, which cover the roads with leaves and mire.<sup>3</sup> In his course he sees an old man working in his vineyard, and, like a catspaw on the surface of the sea, he whispers in his ear a warning of which but half the sound is caught before the

Analysis  
of the  
hymn.

<sup>1</sup> Hymn to Hermes, 24. He finds the tortoise and makes the lyre, and plays on it as soon as he has stepped out of the cave, and before he goes on his plundering expedition.

It is at this point that the legend of Hermes runs into that of Orpheus, who represents (*Tales from Greek Mythology*, p. 111) the Vedic Rhibus, or Arbus. In these Mr. Kelly sees an image of the wind. 'We see how the cruder idea of the Ribhus, sweeping trees and rocks in wild dance before them by the force of their stormy song, grew, under the beautifying touch of the Hellenic imagination, into the legend of that master of the lyre whose magic tones made torrents pause and listen, rocks and trees descend with delight from their mountain beds, and moved even Pluto's unrelenting heart to pity' (*Indo-European Traditions and Folk-lore*, p. 17). Mr. Kelly seems to lay an undue stress on the theory which finds in Aryan mythology an expression chiefly of the effects of clouds and winds.

<sup>2</sup> Hymn to Hermes, 65.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 75

breeze has passed away. All the night long<sup>1</sup> the wind roared, or, as the poet says, Hermes toiled, till the branches of the trees, rubbing against each other, burst into a flame; and so men praise Hermes as the giver of the kindest boon—fire.<sup>2</sup> The flames, fanned by the wind, consume the sacrifice; but Hermes (the wind), though hungry, tastes not of it;<sup>3</sup> and when the morning has come he returns to his mother's cave, and, in the words of the poet, passes through the keyhole like the sigh of a summer breeze, or mist on a hill-side.<sup>4</sup> The wind is tired of blowing, or, in other words, the feet of Hermes patter almost noiselessly over the floor,<sup>5</sup> till he lies down to sleep in his cradle, which he had left but a few hours before. The sun rises, and finds to his discomfiture that the

<sup>1</sup> Hymn to Hermes, 140.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 110 et seq.:

'Ερμῆς τοι πράτιστα πυρήνα πῦρ τ' ἀνέθωκεν.

The assertion seems to be inconsistent with the legend of Prometheus. The idea of the two stories appears, however, to be not the same; and this, of itself, might suffice to account for the difference.

<sup>3</sup> οδμὴ γάρ μν ἔτειρε, καὶ ἀθάνατον περ ἔδντα,  
ἥδει<sup>2</sup>· δλλ' οὐδὲ οἱ ἐπείθετο θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ,  
καὶ τε μάλ' ἴμειροντι, περὰν ἱερῆς κατὰ δειρῆς.

Hymn to Hermes, 131.

<sup>4</sup> διὰ κληῆθρον ἔδυνεν,  
αὕρη δπωρινῆ ἐναλίγκιος, ἡντ' ὁμίχλη. Ib. 147.

<sup>5</sup> Ib. 149: ἥκα ποσὶ προβιβῶν.

herds are gone. He too sees the hedger of Onchestos, who thinks, but is not sure,<sup>1</sup> that he had seen a babe driving the cows before him. The sun hastens on his way, sorely perplexed<sup>2</sup> at the confused foot-tracks, covered with mud and strewn with leaves, just as if the oaks had taken to walking on their heads.<sup>3</sup> But when he charges the child with the theft, the defence is grounded on his tender age. Can the breeze of a day old,<sup>4</sup> breathing as softly as a babe new born, be guilty of so much mischief? Its proper home is the summer land<sup>5</sup>—why should it stride wantonly over bleak hills and bare heaths? But, with an instinct singularly true, Hermes is represented as closing his defence with a long whistle,<sup>6</sup> which sounds very much like mockery and tends perhaps to heighten the scepticism of Apollo. The latter seizes the child, but a loud blast<sup>7</sup> makes him suddenly let go; and the child, once again quiet, complains of unkind treatment, and appeals to his father<sup>8</sup> (the sky). Zeus refuses to accept his plea of infancy; but when Hermes brings back

<sup>1</sup> Hymn to Hermes, 208.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 219.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 349.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 273: *χθὶς γενόμην.*

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 267–8.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 280: *μάκρ' ἐποτυρίζων, ἀλιον τὸν μῆθον δκούων.*

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 296. The expression, anthropomorphised, is very coarse. Its original meaning is perfectly plain and harmless.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 312.

the cows, the suspicions of Apollo are again roused,<sup>1</sup> and, dreading his angry looks, the child strikes his tortoise lyre, and wakes sounds so soft and tender<sup>2</sup> that the hardest-hearted man cannot choose but listen. Never on the heights of Olympus, where winds perhaps blow strong, as they commonly do on mountain summits, had Phœbus heard a strain so soothing.<sup>3</sup> Like the pleasant murmur of a breeze in the palm groves of the South, it filled his heart with a strange yearning,<sup>4</sup> carrying him back to the days when the world was young and all the bright gods kept holiday, and he longed for the glorious gift of music<sup>5</sup> which made the life of Hermes a joy on the earth. His prayer is at once granted. The wind grudges not his music to the sun;<sup>6</sup> he seeks only to know the secrets which his own eyes cannot penetrate,<sup>7</sup> for Phœbus sits in the high heaven by the side of Zeus, knowing the inmost mind of his father, and his keen glance can pierce the depths of the green sea. This wisdom the sun may not impart. Hermes cannot rise to the height of heaven, but there are other honours in store for him, many and great. He shall be the guardian of the herds of heaven; his song shall cheer the sons of men and lessen the sum of their suffering; his breath shall waft

<sup>1</sup> Hymn to Hermes, 405 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 419.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 445, 450.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 422.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 457.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 465.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 472, 532.

the dead to the world unseen, and when he wills he may get wisdom by holding converse with the hoary Thriæ far down in the clefts of Parnassus.<sup>1</sup> The compact is ratified by the oath of Hermes that he will do no hurt to the shrine of Apollo,<sup>2</sup> who declares that he loves nothing so well as the fresh breeze of heaven.<sup>3</sup> True to the last to the spirit of the myth, the poet adds that his friendship for man is not equal to his love for the sun. Hermes has a way of doing men mischief, while they are asleep.<sup>4</sup>

Thus has the Greek bard expanded into a coherent poem a myth of which the germ had long lain beneath a few scattered phrases which told of Saramâ, the hound of the gods, who guards the cattle for the lord of heaven. Whatever embellishment it may have received from his genius, the humour manifest throughout the tale is not his own creation. It was involved in the very truthfulness of the conception, although this conception was worked out with an unconscious fidelity which is indeed astonishing; for the poet, probably, would hardly have identified Hermes with the winds of heaven as confidently as, when he told of Seléné watching over Endymion, he must have felt that

The  
myth of  
Hermes  
pecu-  
liarly  
congenial  
to the  
Greek  
mind.

<sup>1</sup> Hymn to Hermes, 555.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 527.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 525.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 578.

he was speaking really of the moon and the sun. But the comic vein thus developed was one peculiarly congenial to the liveliness of the Greek mind. Brought out more prominently in the character of Heracles, this laughter-loving spirit passed easily into a biting satire of the whole Greek theology in the 'Battle of the Frogs and Mice' (xx.), where Athénê herself becomes the subject of a profane merriment which Homer hesitates not to indulge in at the expense of Arês, Hephaistos, and Aphroditê. The relations of Zeus and Hérê, in the Iliad, have also their ridiculous side, but this is the result of the same causes which degraded the character of Heracles to that of a drunken reveller.

If the greater number of Greek legends have been thus reduced to their primitive elements, <sup>Dynastic legends.</sup> the touch of the same wand will lay open many more which may seem to have grown up on quite another model. Even the dynastic legends of Thebes will not wholly resist the method which has disclosed so many secrets. For other tales the work is done. There is absolutely nothing left for further analysis in the stories of Orpheus and Eurydikê, of Kephalos and Procris, of Selénê and Endymion, Niobê and Leto, Démêtér and Persephonê, Cadmus and Europa, Daphnê and Apollo. Not an incident remains unexplained in the legends of Heracles, of Althæa

and the Burning Brand, of Phaethon, Memnon, and Bellerophon. If there are bypaths in the stories of Ariadne, Medeia, Semelê, Prometheus, or of the cows of the sun in the *Odyssey*, they have been followed up to the point from which they all diverge. It will be seen that the tales contained in the present volume present no difficulties which have not been already encountered in other legends.

The great dynastic story of Argos is made up of a solar myth, recounted at length in the adventures of Perseus and repeated in those of Heracles. Perseus is the child of the golden shower, and of Danaë, Daphnê, Dahanâ, the dawn, and he is doomed, like other solar children, to be the slayer of the sire to whom he owes his life. His weapons are those of Apollo and Hermes. The sword of Chrysaor is in his hand, the golden sandals on his feet. His journey to the land of the Graiae, the dim twilight, is only another form of the journey of Heracles to the garden of the Hesperides. When from the home of the Graiae he went to the cave of the Gorgons, the story sprang from the mythical phrase, ‘The sun is gone from the twilight land to fight with the powers of darkness.’ But night has a twofold meaning. There is the darkness which must yield to the sun and die, and there is the absolute darkness which the sun can never

The  
dynastic  
legends  
of Argos  
combine  
or repeat  
several  
solar  
myths.

penetrate. The former is the mortal Medusa, the latter her deathless sisters. The story ran that Medusa compared her own beauty with that of Athénê, but the solemn grandeur of the starlit night could be no rival for the radiant goddess on whom rested the full glory of Zeus and Phœbus. When from the Gorgon land he wandered to the shores of Libya, the story introduced an adventure which recurs in a hundred forms. Andromeda, Ariadne, Brenhyldr, Aslauga, Hesianê, Dêianeira, Philonoê, Medeia, Iocastê, were all won after the slaughter of monsters or serpents, while the triumphant return of Danaê with her son to Argos, after his toil is ended, is but the meeting of Heracles with Iolê, the return of the sun in the evening to the mother that bare him in the morning.

In the tale of Iamos the serpents of the night perform a kindly office, but it is Apollo who touches his ear that he may understand the speech of birds, while in another myth Repro-  
duction  
of solar  
myths. the serpents themselves convey this gift to Melampus. The story of Skylla is a tangled skein, in which several threads of solar legend have been mingled. Minos is himself a son of Zeus and the husband of Pasiphaë, whose name speaks of her at once as the child of Helios. The daughter of Nisos is smitten with the glorious beauty of his countenance, as is Echidna with that of Heracles;

but the golden lock of her father, while it remains unshorn, is an invincible safeguard to the city against the assaults of Minos. The love of Skylla is not thus to be disappointed. The lock is shorn; and the name of the maiden (as the rending monster) shows how well she has served the malignant powers of darkness. The tale of Asclepios is almost an echo of the story of Kephalos and Procris; but the child of Corônis, like Iamos, Melampus, and Medeia, inherits not so much the brightness of the sun as his power of seeing into hidden things, and so, by a more than earthly wisdom, drawing forth the healing powers of herbs and roots. The character of Theseus bears a closer resemblance to that of Heracles<sup>1</sup> than of Perseus. He is a slayer of monsters, and more especially of robbers and evil-doers, while, like Heracles, he forsakes those whom he loves, and has many loves in many lands. Armed with a sword welded of the same metal with the sword of Apollo and the spear of Achilleus, he, like Skythê in the tale of Echidna, wins the inheritance of his fathers, and becomes a companion of Meleagros, whose life is bound up with the burning brand. His descent to Hades is indeed

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Thirlwall lays stress on this resemblance (*History of Greece*, vol. i. ch. v.); but his efforts are directed towards a discovery of the historical facts underlying the legend—a poor prey for a mighty hunter.

disastrous ; but the mishap is repaired by aid of another solar legend. It is Heracles who delivers the wooer of Persephonê.<sup>1</sup>

Another solar tale is brought before us in the transparent legend of Tantalos; but it tells us not <sup>The legend of</sup> so much of his might and his exploits as of Tantalos. his wealth and his wisdom and the fearful doom inflicted for his sin. The palace of the Phrygian king is but the golden house of Helios from which Phaethon went forth on his ill-starred journey. His wisdom is that keen insight into the counsels of Zeus, which Phœbus cannot impart even to Hermes, the messenger of the gods.<sup>2</sup> His frequent converse with the king of gods and men is an image of the daily visit of Helios to the dizzy heights of heaven. The theft of nectar and ambrosia<sup>3</sup> finds its parallel in the stealing of the fire by Prometheus; and the gift thus bestowed on his Phrygian people is but the

<sup>1</sup> In short, it becomes clear that attributes, now assigned to a vast number of personages, were originally interchangeable; and thus the Greek myths, by themselves, point to a state of things which is realised in the earlier Vedic poetry, where 'there are as yet no genealogies, no settled marriages between gods and goddesses. The father is sometimes the son, the brother is the husband, and she who in one hymn is the mother is in another the wife' (Max Müller, Comp. Myth.). The subject is more fully entered into in the History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 532 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Hymn to Hermes, 534.

<sup>3</sup> Pindar, Ol. i. 100.

wealth which the sun brings from the sky and bestows lavishly on the children of men. The hound given to him in pledge by Pandareôs carries us to the hymn of Hermes. It is the mighty Sarameyâs, who chases the clouds over seas and mountains, always felt but never seen, a gift which the sun may receive, but cannot yield up again. The slaughter of Pelops, and the serving up of his limbs to Zeus at the banquet, is as horrible as the tale which relates the birth of Erichthonios,<sup>1</sup> but its meaning is as clear and as innocent. The genial warmth of the sun brings to light and life the fruits of the earth which is his bride; his raging heat kills the very offspring in which he had delighted, and offers it up a scorched and withered sacrifice in the eyes of Zeus, the sky. The sentence passed upon him is in still closer accordance with the old mythical language. When Hermes first kindled a fire by rubbing together the dried branches of the forest, and slew one of the oxen of Phœbus in solemn sacrifice, he appeased not his hunger,<sup>2</sup> for the wind may kindle the fire, but it cannot eat of that which the fire devours. So, too, Tantalos may gaze on sparkling waters and golden fruits; but if he stoops to drink or puts forth his hand to the laden branches, the water is dried up as by the scorching wind of the

<sup>1</sup> Apollod. iii. 14, 6.

<sup>2</sup> Hymn to Hermes, 130-135.

desert, and, in the words of the Homeric poet,<sup>1</sup> only black mud and gaping clay remain in place of flowing water, and the leaves wither away beneath the fierce glare of tropical noonday. In the rock which threatens to crush him, we see again only the misshapen Polyphēmos hurling down huge crags on the ships of Odysseus—the unsightly offspring of the stormy sea—the huge cumulus cloud whose awful blackness oppresses both eye and heart as an omen of impending doom.

The myth of Ixion brings before us simply the action of the sun under another phase. It belongs, perhaps, to the least attractive class of Greek legends, but its origin is as simple as that which gave birth to the repulsive story of Erichthonios. Like the name of Orpheus, that of Ixion cannot be explained by a reference to any Greek words; but it is identified with the Sanskrit *akshivan*, the being who turns on a wheel, and M. Bréal well remarks<sup>2</sup> that no room is left for doubt when, in many a passage of the Vedic hymn, we read of the wheel of the sun, and the battle waged by Dyaus, the heaven, to snatch it from the grasp of night. So Ixion loves Hérê, the queen of the æther, the pure heaven, because Indra loves the Dawn and Phœbus longs for Daphnê.

<sup>1</sup> Odyss. xi. 187.

<sup>2</sup> Le Mythe d'Œdipe, in Revue Archéologique for Sept. 1863.

But he is also wedded to the clouds, and becomes the father of the Kentaurs, in whom again are seen the Sanskrit Ghandharvas,<sup>1</sup> the bright clouds in whose arms the sun reposes as he journeys through the sky. And so the tale went, that in the clouds he saw the image of the lady Hérê, and paid the penalty of his unlawful love. The idea of toil, unwillingly borne, again came in, for Ixion is *akshivan*, whose wheel can never rest, as the sun cannot pause in his daily career. The legend is almost transparent throughout. As the wealth of Tantalos was the fruit which the genial sunshine calls up from the earth, the treasure-house of Ixion is the blazing form of Helios, the abyss of intolerable splendour which scorches the body of Hesioneus.<sup>2</sup> The darkness and gloom which follows the treacherous deed of Ixion, is a time of plague and drought, during which the hidden sun was thought to bow himself before the throne of Zeus. But even yet the doom pursues him. He has scarcely sought pardon for one offence before he is ready to commit another. Hérê, the queen, whose placid majesty reflects the solemn stillness of the blue heaven, fills with a new love the heart which had once beaten only for Dia, as Heracles lived at first only in the love of Iolê. Each day his love grows warmer, as the summer sun gains a

<sup>1</sup> Le Mythe d'Œdipe.

<sup>2</sup> εἰς βόθρον πυρὸς μεατόν. Diod. iv. 69.

greater power. But the time of vengeance is at hand. As he goes on his way, he sees a form, as of Hérê, reposing on the arms of the clouds; but when he draws nigh to embrace her, she vanishes like Daphnê from the gaze of Phœbus Apollo, or Eurydikê from that of Orpheus.

The elements of a more modern ethical belief are introduced into the dynastic legends of Thebes.

Introduction of ethical sentiment. As in the tale of Crcesus, and still more as in the great trilogy of Æschylus, we have in them something like a philosophy of life. The fortunes of Eteocles and Polyneikes show how the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children.<sup>1</sup> But, although it is easy to see how, when once the results of old mythical phrases were submitted to a moral criticism, the new turn so given to the tale might give birth to an entirely new narrative, the earlier part of the legend exhibits the framework of many another tale of Greek mythology. Œdipus is the son of Iocastê, whose name suggests that of Iolê, Iamos, or Iobates. Laïos, like Acrisios, Priam, and Aleos, dreads his own child, and exposes him on a rough hillside,<sup>2</sup> while his

<sup>1</sup> It is a fearful tale, oppressive from the gloom which pervades it. Mr. Dasent is impressed with the same feeling by much of the Northern mythology; but he insists on assigning the features with which he finds fault to a corruption of morals, not of speech. See *Gods and Heroes*, p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> As the tale of Paris went, on Ida. But the Sanskrit Idâ is the earth, the wife of Dyaus; and so we have before us the

gloomy and negative character is in complete accord with that of Hecabē or Leto. But the prophecy of Apollo must be fulfilled. Œdipus, like Paris, Telephos, and Perseus, grows up far away from his home, and, like them, remarkable for strength, beauty, and vigour. The suspicion that he is not the child of his supposed mother, Meropē, sends him forth to Delphi, and the homicide of Laiōs is the death of the parent of the sun, as the latter starts on his career. Then, like Perseus, Theseus, and Bellerophon, Œdipus, in his turn, must destroy the monster which vexes the land of Cadmus; but with the strength of Hercules he unites the wisdom of Medeia and Asclepios, and the Sphinx, baffled by the solution of her riddle, leaps from the rock and dies. This monster belongs, beyond doubt, to the class of which Python, Typhon, Fafnir, and Polyphēmos are examples. None of these, however, express precisely the same impressions. Fafnir is the dragon of winter, who guards the fruits of the earth within his pitiless folds. The Sphinx is the dark and lowering cloud, striking terror into the hearts of men, and heightening the agonies of a time of drought, until Œdipus, who knows her mysterious speech—as the sun was said, in a still earlier age, to understand the mutterings of the mythical phrase, ‘The rays of the sun at its birth rest level on the earth, or on the hillside.’

rumbling thunder—unfolds her dark sayings, and drives her from her throne, just as the cloud, smitten by the sun, breaks into rain, and then vanishes away.<sup>1</sup> His victory is won. The bright being has reached his goal, and the fair Iocastē becomes his bride. This point marks the close of the original myth; but Iocastē, his wife, is also his mother, and the morality of men could not recognise a form of speech in which the same person might at once be the son and the husband of another. The relations of anthropomorphous gods were no longer interchangeable, as they appear in the earlier Vedic hymns. From the union of a mother with her son the moral sense of the Greek would turn with horror, and, unconscious of the real nature of the incident so related, he would look at once for an awful recompense from the sleepless Erinnys of the murdered Laïos. Iocastē dies in her marriage-chamber, as Œnône dies on the funeral pile of Paris, and, in something of the spirit of the old tale, Œdipus must tear out his own eyes, as the light of the setting sun is blotted out by the dark storm-cloud.

<sup>1</sup> M. Bréal, in his masterly analysis of the myth of Œdipus, connects the name Sphinx with the verb *σφίγγω*, as the shutting in of the rain within the cloud. The Bœotian name *φῖξ* may throw some doubt on the explanation, but it cannot affect the general character of the legend.

For the meaning of the name Laïos, see M. Bréal, *Le Mythe d'Œdipe*, p. 209.

Henceforth, the story is the expression of Greek ethics, until, in the last scene (in the company of Theseus, the solar hero of Attica), Oedipus goes forth to die, amid the blaze of the lightning, in the sacred grove of the Eumenides.

The blinded Oedipus dies unseen; but in his last hours his eye had rested on Antigone, the fair and tender light, which sheds its soft hue over the eastern heaven, as the sun sinks in death beneath the western waters. But, whether in the slaughter of his father or his marriage with Iocasté, Oedipus was but fulfilling his doom. These things must be so. Heracles must see Iole in the evening, as surely as the sun, once risen, must go across the sky and then sink down into his bed beneath the earth or sea. It was an iron fate from which there was no escaping; and this idea accounts for the awful *'Ανάγκη*, the invincible necessity, which urges on the wretched Oedipus, and explains the origin of that theological belief which finds its mightiest expression in the dramas which tell us of the sin of Agamemnon and the vengeance of Clytaemnestra.

We approach at last the immortal epic of the Greek heroic age. Not much of the Hesiodic theogony is to be found in either the Iliad or the Odyssey. It was no part of the poet's purpose to recount formally the birth or descent of gods or heroes. But we have no warrant for

Extent of  
Homeric  
mytho-  
logy.

asserting that he was ignorant of legends which he has not mentioned ; and arguments drawn simply from his silence are either inadmissible or must be received with the keenest scrutiny.<sup>1</sup> Zeus is with him the son of Cronos. He knew therefore of dynasties among the gods ; and the weight of proof lies with those who maintain that he had never heard the story of Prometheus. He knew that Achilleus was to die young, although that knowledge is but incidentally displayed, unless we assume that the Iliad was written by a single poet, and that that poet was also the author of the whole Odyssey. He knew that Paris was called Alexandros ; and it is impossible to show that he was unaware of the reasons for which that name was given. Nay, the change which has come over the character of Paris is one of the most marked features in the Homeric description of that hero. He knew also that the whole expedition of the Achaians against Troy was but an incident in the life of Paris, for the very cause of the war is that Paris came and stole Helen from the house of Menelaos. He knew further, for he tells us plainly, that the inaction of Achilleus had its counterpart in the inaction of Paris. And if he tells us how, after his long fit of sullen anger, Achilleus came forth in all his old energy, he also knew that Paris was not to be always idle, and

<sup>1</sup> See also the Gods and Heroes, p. 69.

that from him Achilleus himself was to receive his death-wound.<sup>1</sup> How marvellously the whole life of Paris, in which the Trojan war is but one of the later scenes, exhibits a true picture of the sun's course from its rising to its setting, the poet perhaps may have never known. It is of the very essence of mythology that the original significance of the names, which serve as the groundwork of its narratives, should be only in part remembered. The author of the hymn to Hermes little knew probably that he was simply relating the rivalry of the wind and the sun; but he knew enough of the attributes of Hermeias to write a poem, almost every line of which points to the mythical speech of which the tale is a petrifaction. The author of the Iliad may not have known or felt that Achilleus was but the Hellenic reflection of the seducer whom he sought to punish; but his language throughout the poem harmonises strangely with the mythical phrases which speak of the lord of day when he hides away his face behind the clouds. He could not know that the Norseman even then, wandering in regions which

<sup>1</sup> Ηματι τῷ ὅτε κέν σε Πάρις καὶ Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων  
δοθλὸν ἔστι δλέσσωσιν ἐν Σκαιῆσι πύλησιν. Il. xx. 360.

I may perhaps be pardoned for making frequent quotations from the text of the Iliad; but in an analysis leading to conclusions which may be regarded with suspicion on the ground of novelty, I felt that I ought at each step to give the authority for my assertions.

for the Achaian had no existence, was framing the tale which grew up into the epic of the Volsungs and the Nibelungs; and that in that tale Agamemnon and his hosts warring against Paris were represented by Gunnar and his followers planning the death of Sigurdr. With the cause of the expedition to Troy he had no immediate concern. He tells us, in passing, the cause of the war, but his theme is the wrath of the great chieftain from Phthia, and he has kept to that theme with wonderful fidelity, if not to the Greek nature, yet to the old mythical speech. For it seems impossible to withhold the admission, that those portions of the poem which relate exclusively to the independent exploits of their chiefs were at a later day embodied into a poem which was not an Iliad, but an Achillēis. The arguments of Colonel Mure<sup>1</sup> and Mr. Gladstone<sup>2</sup> in no way meet the objections (seemingly unanswerable) of Mr. Grote<sup>3</sup> against the original continuity of the poem in its present form. Nor, if it be necessary to account

<sup>1</sup> Critical History of Greek Literature, book ii. ch. xvi.

<sup>2</sup> Homer and the Homeric Age. *Aoidos*.

<sup>3</sup> History of Greece, Part I. ch. xxi.; and see more particularly the note on the embassy to Achilleus. This note seems conclusively to dispose of every attempt to maintain the original unity of the present Iliad on the ground of a supposed moral consistency in the character of Achilleus, while it also shows that the writer of the Achillēis knew nothing of the first effort for reconciliation.

for the insertion of the *Ilias*, have we far to go for a reason. The theme chosen by the author of the *Achilléis* confined him to a period of comparative inaction. The valour of the Achaians could only be asserted by an independent poem, which showed that they were not helpless<sup>1</sup> even without the aid of the great son of Peleus. It is not surprising that the two poems should have been gradually blended together.<sup>2</sup>

Thus was produced an epic as magnificent as it is complicated; but through all its intricacy may be traced the thread of the original myth; and the fact that it may be so traced is the more remarkable as we realise the extent to which the process of disintegration has been carried on. If the poem does not exhibit the systematised theogony of Hesiod, still Phœbus is already a

The tale  
of the  
Achil-  
léis.

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Mure, strangely enough, sees in Il. ii.-vii. nothing but a catalogue of disasters, bringing misery and disgrace on the Argive hosts (*Crit. Hist. Gr. Lit.* vol. i. p. 256). Mr. Grote, far more truly, says that the great chiefs are 'in full force at the beginning of the eleventh book' (*History of Greece*, vol. ii. p. 239).

<sup>2</sup> It would seem that the chief error of Wolf and his followers was the attempt to fix the date of this combination, which they attribute to Peisistratos. Mr. Grote has shown that of this fact we have no evidence, while the regulations for the rhapsodists given by Solon furnish strong evidence against any such notion. Comparative mythologists might probably decline to give even an approximate date; but the reduction of the *Iliad* even to its present shape is probably the work of a far earlier time than is generally supposed.

person distinct from Helios, Artemis, or Athénē; Hecabē is no longer identified with Selénē; Zeus is no longer one with Ouranos. Only a few signs remain of the interchangeable character which is so prominent in the gods of the earlier Vedic poems. And, further, the Iliad necessarily exhibits the later elements which must spring up with the growth of a definite religion and the developement of something like civil government. Still, on the Trojan shore, facing the island of Tenedos, the old tale is repeated, which assumes a form still more gloomy in the mythology of the North. The mighty Achilleus, over whose childhood had watched Phoinix (the purple cloud),<sup>1</sup> is there to fight, but, like Bellerophon, as he insists emphatically, in no quarrel of his own.<sup>2</sup> A hard toil is before him, but, as with Heracles, the honour which he wins is not to be his own.<sup>3</sup> Like Heracles again, and Perseus and Theseus, his limbs are strong, and his heart knows no fear. In place of the sword of Apollo, the Chrysaôr, he has the unerring spear which no mortal can wield but himself.<sup>4</sup> Still, like Heracles and Apollo and

<sup>1</sup> Another name, expressive of the class to which belong Iolē, Iolaos, &c.

<sup>2</sup> οὐ γὰρ ἔγα τρεῖσιν ἔνεκ' ἥλιθον αἰχμητῶν  
δεῦρο μαχησόμενος, ἐπει οὐ τί μοι αἴτιοι εἰσιν. Il. i. 153.

<sup>3</sup> τιμὴν δρυύμενοι Μενελάῳ σοὶ τε, κυνῶπα. Il. i. 159.

<sup>4</sup> τὸ μὲν οὐ δύνατ' ἄλλος Ἀχαιῶν  
πάλλειν, ἀλλὰ μνοὶ οἶος ἐπίστατο πῆλαι Ἀχιλλεύς.

Il. xvi. 142.

Perseus and Bellerophon, he is practically the servant of one on whom he looks down with a deserved contempt.<sup>1</sup> On him falls all the labour of war, but the spoil which he wins with his bow and spear must pass into the hands of Agamemnon,<sup>2</sup> as those of Heracles fall to the lot of Eurystheus. Still he has his consolation. He is cheered by the love of Hippodameia<sup>3</sup> (the tamer of the horses of the sun), as the love of Iolê spurred Heracles at the beginning of his toils. But even Briséis he must now give up, as Heracles was compelled to part from Iolê. At the very thought of losing her, his passion overleaps all barriers; but his rage is subdued by the touch of Athénê, the daughter of Zeus, the sky.<sup>4</sup> He must yield, but with Briséis vanishes the light of his life, and he vows a solemn vow that henceforth in the war the Achaians shall look in vain for his aid.<sup>5</sup> He hangs up his sword and spear in his

<sup>1</sup> This contempt is fully expressed, i. 225–231.

<sup>2</sup> τὸ μὲν πλεῖον πολυδίκος πολέμοιο  
χεῖρες 'μαλ διέπουσ· ἀτὰρ τὴν ποτε δασμὸς ἵκηται,  
σοὶ τὸ γέρας πολὺ μεῖζον. Il. i. 167.

<sup>3</sup> Briséis being a mere patronymic.

<sup>4</sup> Il. i. 195. It is at the least singular that, while Briséis comes from Lyrnessos, Diomédē, who takes her place, belongs to the south-western Lesbos (Il. ix. 658). So Οenônē lives on Ida, and Helen in the far west. Iolê is the daughter of Eurytos (another name of the class Euryganeia, &c.), in the eastern island Eubœa; Dêianeira lives in the western Calydon.

<sup>5</sup> Il. i. 240.

tent, takes off his glittering armour, and the Argive warriors see the face of the bright hero no more. Yet even the fierceness of his wrath cannot avail to keep entirely in the background another feature in which he resembles Paris, Heracles, Theseus, Jason. Briséis is gone, but Diomédê, the daughter of Phorbas, supplies her place, as Cœnône gives way to Helen, Iolê to Dêianeira, and the wise Medeia to the daughter of the Argive Creon. But the mind of Achilleus remains unchanged. His wrath is terrible as the wrath of the angry sun, and he bids Thetis, his mother, go to the throne of Zeus (the sky) and pray him to send such a storm as may well make the Achaians rate their king at his true value.<sup>1</sup> The darkness thickens, but at first the Achaians care not. Zeus alone knows and proclaims that the fortunes of the Argives themselves must remain under the cloud until Achilleus again goes forth to the battle.<sup>2</sup> His words are soon accomplished. The knowledge that the great champion of the Argives no longer takes part in the war inspires the Trojans with fresh strength. The storm-clouds rise with greater volume when the light of the sun is blotted out of the sky. Still the great chiefs of the Argives stand forth in unabated confidence;<sup>3</sup> but Agamemnon, Odysseus,

<sup>1</sup> Il. i. 407-412.

<sup>2</sup> Il. viii. 477.

<sup>3</sup> Il. i. 1-55.

and Diomédês are soon wounded in the fight, and the Achaians begin to realise their grievous loss. Their misery excites the compassion of Patroclos, in whom the character of Achilleus is reflected, as is that of Helios in Phaethon.<sup>1</sup> Melted by the tears of his friend, Achilleus gives him his own armour, and bids him go forth to aid the Argives. But with this charge he joins a caution. Phaethon must not touch with his whip the horses of Helios, and Patroclos must not drive the chariot of Achilleus on any other path than that which has been pointed out to him.<sup>2</sup> But although Patroclos can wear the armour of Achilleus, he cannot wield his spear.<sup>3</sup> The sword and lance of Apollo and Perseus, of Artemis and Theseus, may be touched by no other hands than their own. Patroclos is ready for the fight, and yoked to the car of Achilleus stand the immortal horses Xanthos and Balios (golden and speckled as a summer sky), which Podargē (the swift breeze) bare to Zephyros (the strong west wind) near

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Grote has remarked this. ‘Patroclus has no substantive position: he is the attached friend and second of Achilleus, but nothing else’ (History of Greece, vol. ii. p. 238). Colonel Mure, however, discerns in the contrast between the two strong evidence of Homer’s ‘knowledge of human nature’ (Crit. Hist. Gr. Lit. vol. i. p. 285).

<sup>2</sup> μή σύ γ' ἐκευθεν ἔμειο λιλαίεσθαι πολεμίζειν. Il. xvi. 89.

<sup>3</sup> Εγχος δ' οὐχ ἔλετ' οἷον ἀμύμονος Αἰακίδαο, κ. τ. λ.

Il. xvi. 140.

the shore of the ocean stream.<sup>1</sup> The sun is breaking for a moment through the mist. Like hungry wolves, the Myrmidons (the streaming rays) stand forth to arm themselves at the bidding of their chieftain.<sup>2</sup> For a time the strength of Achilleus nerves the arm of Patroclos, so that he can smite Sarpédon, the great chief of the Lykians, in whose veins runs the blood of Bellerophon, and for whom the bitter tears of Zeus fall in big drops of rain from the sky (Dyaus).<sup>3</sup> But the transient splendour is soon dimmed. It was but the semblance of the sun looking out from the dark cloud; and Patroclos, therefore, meets his doom. But the poet recurs unconsciously to the old myth, and it is Apollo who disarms Patroclos,<sup>4</sup> although it is Hector

<sup>1</sup> Il. xvi. 151. These horses are the immortal Harits, the Greek *χάριτες*. They also reappear under the name *árván*, in the feminine *árvashí*, and are finally embodied in the Greek god of love *\*Eρως*. Iris, the rainbow, is referred to another root; but Iros, the name of the beggar in the *Odyssey*, is clearly the same as Iris, and stands simply for a messenger. To assign it to another origin, even incorrectly, would only be to repeat the process which connected the violet clouds of morning with the idea of poison. See Max Müller, Comp. Myth. pp. 81, 83.

<sup>2</sup> Il. xvi. 156.

<sup>3</sup> αἰματοέσσας δὲ ψυδᾶς κατέχενεν Ἱραῖς. Il. xvi. 459.

<sup>4</sup> Il. xvi. 790, κ. τ. λ. This was a strict mythical necessity; yet Colonel Mure lays great stress on it, as showing the cowardice and brutality of Hector (Crit. Hist. vol. i. p. 281). The result of his false method is, that he finds himself compelled on every occasion to vilify the Trojans for the exaltation of their enemies.

who slays him. The immortal horses weep for his death and the fall of their charioteer Automedon, while Zeus mourns that ever he bestowed them as a gift on so mean and wretched a thing as man.<sup>1</sup> In the fearful struggle which follows for the body of Patroclos, the clouds are seen fighting a fierce battle over the sun, whose splendour they have for a time extinguished. The ragged and streaming vapours which rush across the sky have their counterpart in the throng of the Trojans who fling themselves like hounds on the wounded boar.<sup>2</sup> But a fiercer storm is raging behind the dark veil. Beneath the 'black cloud of his sorrow,' the anguish of Achilleus is preparing an awful vengeance.<sup>3</sup> The beauty of his countenance is marred, but the nymphs rise from the sea to comfort him,<sup>4</sup> as folk still say, 'the sun drinks,' when the long rays stream slantwise from the clouds to the waters beneath. One desire alone fills his heart, the burning thirst for vengeance; but when Thetis warns him that the death of Hector must soon be followed by his

In a less degree, Mr. Gladstone's criticism lies open to the same remark.

<sup>1</sup> Il. xvii. 444.

<sup>2</sup> Il. xvii. 725.

<sup>3</sup> *ως φάτο· τὸν δ' ἄχεος νεφέλη ἐκάλυψε μέλαινα.*

Il. xviii. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Il. xviii. 36. These nymphs are only half anthropomorphised. Their names still express their own meaning.

own,<sup>1</sup> his answer is that the destruction of his great enemy will be ample recompense for his own early doom. Even Heracles, the dearest of the sons of Zeus, had submitted to the same hard lot.<sup>2</sup> His mind is made up. He retains still the unerring spear. It remains only that he should wait for the glistening armour wrought on the anvil of the fire-god Hephaistos. But, although the hour of his vengeance is not yet come, his countenance still has its terrors, and the very sight of his form<sup>3</sup> fills the Trojans with dismay, as they hear his well-known war-cry. His work is in part done. The body of Patroclos is recovered as the sun goes down unwillingly into the streams of ocean.<sup>4</sup> Then follows the awful vow of Achilleus. There shall be a goodly mourning for Patroclos. The life-blood of twelve

<sup>1</sup> Il. xviii. 96. The real nature of this myth becomes still more transparent, when looked at through the bald statements of Apollodorus (iii. 13, 8). Troy, he says, cannot be taken without Achilleus: the sun alone can subdue the dark clouds. But Thetis knows that, after Troy is taken, Achilleus must die. The sun must set, after his victory over the mists. So she disguises Achilleus in woman's garb, as the light clouds half veil the early risen sun.

<sup>2</sup> Il. xviii. 117.

<sup>3</sup> Il. xviii. 205. Here the sun is not unclouded. So Achilleus has about his head (*χρύσεον νέφος*) a golden cloud, and the glory streams from him like smoke going up to heaven. The rays of the sun are bursting from the cloud.

<sup>4</sup> Il. xviii. 240.

Trojans shall gush in twelve streams on the altar of sacrifice,<sup>1</sup> like the torn and crimsoned clouds which stream up into the purple heaven when the angry sun has sunk beneath the sea. But the old phrases, which spoke of Helios or Heracles as dying in the arms of Iolê, still spoke of both as coming forth conquerors of the power which had seemed to subdue them; and, true to the ancient speech, the poet makes Thetis assure her son that no hurtful thing shall touch the body of Patroclos, and that, though it should lie untended the whole year round, his face should wear at its close a more glorious and touching beauty.<sup>2</sup> The end draws nigh. The very helmsmen leave the ships as they hear the cry of Achilleus calling them once again to battle.<sup>3</sup> His wrongs shall be redressed. Agamemnon, the king, will yield to him the maiden whom he had taken away, and with her shall come other maidens not less fair, and gifts of priceless beauty.<sup>4</sup> But, with a persistency

<sup>1</sup> Il. xviii. 336.

<sup>2</sup> Ην περ γὰρ κῆται γε τελεσφόρον εἰς ἐνιαυτόν,  
αἰεὶ τῷδ' ἔσται χρῶς ἔμπεδος ἢ καὶ δρεῖαν. Il. xix. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Il. xix. 44.

<sup>4</sup> Il. xix. 140. This is the first submission made by Agamemnon in the Achilléis. It may be noted that here he not only acquits himself of guilt (86), but, in order to fix the blame on Zeus, recites a tale which is essentially a separate poem, and may have existed long before, or apart from, the Ilias or Achilléis, as may have been the case with such lays as that of Meleagros.

which, except by a reference to the sources of the myth, is at best a dark riddle, Agamemnon asserts his own innocence. ‘I am not guilty,’ he said. ‘The blame rests with Zeus and Moira (who fixes the lot of man), and Erinnys, who wanders in the air.’ So the old wrong is atoned. The gifts are placed before him. The fair maidens come forth from the tent, but, with a singular fidelity to the old legend, Briseis comes last of all,<sup>1</sup> beautiful and pure as in the hour when he parted from her,<sup>2</sup> even as Oenone, in her unsullied loveliness, appears by the side of the dying Paris. Then it is that Achilleus forgives the wrong done to him, but repeats the riddle which lurked in the words of Agamemnon. It was not anything in the son of Atreus which could really call forth his wrath. ‘He could never, in his utter helplessness, have taken the maiden from me against my will; but so Zeus would have it, that the doom of many Achaians might be accomplished.’<sup>3</sup> So he bids them go and eat and make ready for the fight; but when Agamemnon would have Achilleus himself feast with them, the answer is that the time for the banquet is not yet come. His friend lies unavenged, and of neither meat nor drink will he taste until his last fight is fought and won.<sup>4</sup> The same truthfulness to the

<sup>1</sup> ἔπειτα, δτὰρ ὄγδοάτην Βρισηΐδα καλλιπέρρον. Il. xix. 245.

<sup>2</sup> Il. xix. 261.

<sup>3</sup> Il. xix. 274.

<sup>4</sup> Il. xix. 210.

old idea runs through the magnificent passage which tells of the arming of Achilleus. The helmets of the humbler warriors are like the cold white vapours which gather in the north.<sup>1</sup> But when Achilleus dons his armour, a glorious light flashes up to heaven, and the earth laughs at its dazzling radiance.<sup>2</sup> His shield gleams like the blood-red moon as it rises from the sea.<sup>3</sup> His helmet glitters like a star, and each hair in the plume glistens like burnished gold. When he tries the armour to see whether it fits his limbs, it bears him like a bird upon the wing.<sup>4</sup> Last of all, he takes down his spear, which none but himself can handle, while Alkimos and Automedon (the strong and mighty) harness his immortal horses. As he mounts the chariot, he bids them bear him safe through the battle and not leave him to die as they had left Patroclos. Then the horse Xanthos bows his head and warns him of the coming doom. Their force is not abated. They can still run swifter than the swiftest wind; and their will is only to save the lord whom they serve and love. But the will of Zeus is stronger still, and Achilleus too must die.<sup>5</sup> It is a kindly

<sup>1</sup> ὡς δ' ὅτε ταρφειαὶ νιφάδες Διὸς ἐκποτέονται  
ψυχραί, ὥπερ βιτῆς αἰθρηγενέος Βορέαο. Il. xix. 358.

<sup>2</sup> αἴγλη δ' οὐρανὸν ἵκε, γέλασσε δὲ πᾶσα περὶ χθών  
χαλκοῦ ὥπερ στεροπῆς. Il. xix. 363.

<sup>3</sup> Il. xix. 374.      <sup>4</sup> Il. xix. 386.      <sup>5</sup> Il. xix. 387-417.

warning, and the hero takes it in good part. ‘I know,’ he says, ‘that I shall see my father and my mother again no more; but the work of vengeance must be accomplished.’ Then, before the great strife begins, Zeus bids all the gods (the powers of the heaven) take each his side. He alone will look down serenely on the struggle as it rages beneath him.<sup>1</sup> Many a Trojan warrior falls by the spear of Achilleus, and the battle waxes fiercer, until all the powers of heaven and earth seem mingled in one wild turmoil. The river Scamandros is indignant that the dead body of Lycaon, the (bright) son of Priam, should be cast into its waters, and complains to Achilleus that his course to the sea is clogged by the blood which is poured into it.<sup>2</sup> But Achilleus leaps fearlessly into the stream, and Scamandros calls for aid to Simoeis. The two rivers swell, and Achilleus is almost overborne.<sup>3</sup> It is a war of elements. The sun is almost conquered by the raging rain. But another power comes upon the scene, and the flood yields to Hephaistos, the might of fire.<sup>4</sup> Fiercer yet grows the strife. The gods themselves struggle wildly in the fray,

<sup>1</sup> Il. xx. 22. The sky itself, regarded as the pure æther, in which Zeus dwells (*κελαινεφές, αἰθίριον νεφέλην*), cannot be conceived as taking part in the contest, although the clouds and lightnings beneath it may.

<sup>2</sup> Il. xxi. 219.

<sup>3</sup> Il. xxi. 325.

<sup>4</sup> Il. xxi. 345.

while Zeus laughs at the sight.<sup>1</sup> Artemis falls smitten by Hérê, and her arrows (the sun's rays) are gathered up by Leto (the dark power) and carried to the throne of Zeus.<sup>2</sup> But, through all the wild confusion of the strife, Achilleus hastens surely to his victory. Before him stands his enemy, but the spell which guarded the life of Hector is broken, for Phœbus has forsaken him.<sup>3</sup> In vain he hurls his spear at Achilleus, in vain he draws his sword. Still Achilleus cannot reach him through the armour of Patroclos,<sup>4</sup> and the death-wound is given where an opening in the plates left his neck bare. The prayer of Hector for mercy is dismissed with contempt, and, in his boundless rage, Achilleus tramples on the body,<sup>5</sup> as the blazing sun seems to trample on the darkness into which it is sinking.

<sup>1</sup> έγέλασσε δέ οἱ φίλοις ἥτορ  
γηθοσύνη, ὅθ' ἀράτο θεοὺς ἔριδι ξυνιόντας. Il. xxii. 390.

The æther looks down in grim serenity on the wild battle in the air beneath.

<sup>2</sup> Il. xxii. 490–505.

<sup>3</sup> Il. xxii. 213: λίπεν δέ τι Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων.

Too much stress can scarcely be laid on these words. In the first place, they make the slaying of Hector quite as much an act of butchery as Colonel Mure represents the death of Patroclos to be on the part of Hector. In the second place, they remove both incidents out of the reach of all ethical criticism.

<sup>4</sup> Il. xxii. 322.

<sup>5</sup> Il. xxii. 395, κ. τ. λ. This is a trait of brutality scarcely to be explained by a reference to the manners of the heroic age.

The close  
of the  
Achil-  
leis.

At this point, in the belief of Mr. Grote, the original Achillēis ended. ‘The death of Hector satisfies the exigencies of a coherent scheme, and we are not entitled to extend the oldest poem beyond the limit which such necessity prescribes.’<sup>1</sup> The force of the objection depends on the idea by which the poet, either consciously or unconsciously, was guided in his design. The sudden plunge of the sun into the darkness which he has for a moment dispelled would be well represented by an abrupt ending with the death of Hector. The ‘more merciful temper’ which Achilleus displays in the last book would not only be necessary ‘to create proper sympathy with his triumph,’ but it would be strictly in accordance with the idea of the sun setting in a broad blaze of generous splendour after his victory over the black mists, even although these are again to close in fierce strife when he is dead.<sup>2</sup> It is this transient gleam of more serene splendour which is signified by the games over which Achilleus presides genially after the slaughter of the Trojan captives, whose blood reddens the ground, just as the torn streamers rush in crimsoned bands across the sky after a storm. Yet it is not easy to suppose

The mystery is solved when we compare it with the mythical language of the earlier Vedic hymns.

<sup>1</sup> History of Greece, vol. ii. p. 266.

<sup>2</sup> Odyssey, xxiv. 41, 42.

with Mr. Grote that the Achilléis ended with the twenty-second book as it now stands, for that book closes with the mourning of Andromachē for Hector, which, even in the eyes of a Greek, would hardly heighten the glory of the conqueror; and the author of it certainly knew of the visit of Priam, which is related in the last book, for he makes the old man express his intention of going to Achilleus when he first learns that his son is dead.<sup>1</sup> But the feeling of the old solar myth is once more brought out prominently in the case of Hector. With the aid of Apollo, the god who fights for the Trojans as the eastern people, he had been the great champion of his country. The desertion of Apollo left him at the mercy of his enemy, as the departure of day is the triumph of the night. But his body, like the body of Patroclos, must still be preserved from all corruption. The ravenous dogs and birds are chased away by Aphroditē,<sup>2</sup> and Apollo wraps it in mist and covers it with a golden shield.<sup>3</sup> From the Odyssey we learn that the idea underlying the story of the death of Achilleus was that of an expiring blaze of splendour, followed by the darkness of the storm. Over his body the Achaians and Trojans struggle in mortal conflict, like the clouds fighting over the dead sun; and only the might of Zeus puts an

<sup>1</sup> Il. xxii. 415.

<sup>2</sup> Il. xxiii. 185.

<sup>3</sup> Il. xxiv. 20.

end to the strife, for the winds alone can drive away the clouds. Then the sea nymphs rise, fair as the cloudless skies of night, and wrap the form of the dead hero in a spotless shroud.

Thus the whole Achilléis is a magnificent solar epic, telling us of a sun rising in radiant majesty, The whole Achilléis is a solar epic. soon hidden by the clouds, yet abiding his time of vengeance, when from the dark veil he breaks forth at last in more than his early strength, scattering the mists and kindling the ragged clouds which form his funeral pyre, nor caring whether his brief splendour shall be succeeded by a darker battle as the vapours close again over his dying glory. The feeling of the old tale is scarcely weakened when the poet tells us of the great cairn which the mariner shall see from afar, on the shore of the broad Hellespontos.<sup>1</sup>

If this, then, be the common groundwork of the Achilléis and the epics of Northern Europe,

The Trojan war is simply one scene of a long drama. the arguments of Mr. Grote against the original continuity of the Iliad in its present form are indefinitely strengthened. The Trojan war itself becomes simply a scene in a long drama,<sup>2</sup> of the other acts of which

<sup>1</sup> *Odyssey*, xxiv. 82.

<sup>2</sup> Much blame, perhaps not undeserved, has been bestowed on the critics who formed the epic cycle and sought to find the sequence of the several legends on which the poems included in

the poet incidentally betrays his knowledge. The life of Achilleus runs in the same groove with that of Alexandros or Paris; the personality of Patroclos is a dim reflection of that of Achilleus; the tale of Meleagros is simply an echo of the legend which, in its more expanded form and with heightened colours, relates the exploits of the son of Peleus.

With this groundwork, the original Achillēis may have ended with the twenty-second book or have been extended to the twenty-fourth. Apart from considerations of style, there is nothing in the story to militate against either supposition. If it ended with the earlier book, the poet closed his narrative with the triumphant outburst of the sun from the clouds which had hidden his glory. The poet who added the last two books was inspired by the old phrases which spoke of a time of serene though shortlived splendour after the sun's great victory. But with this tale of the Achillēis, whatever may be its close, the books which relate the independent exploits of Agamemnon and his attendant chiefs cannot possibly be made to fit. They are the expression of an almost

The  
Iliad as  
con-  
trasted  
with the  
Achil-  
lēis.

that cycle were founded. So far as they sought an historical sequence they were wrong. Yet their feeling that there was a sequence in these tales was not altogether without foundation. But the sequence is one of phenomena, not of facts in human history.

unconscious feeling that the son of Peleus and Thetis was a being not sufficiently akin to Achaians to satisfy the instincts of national pride and patriotism.<sup>1</sup> It is of course possible—in the opinion of Mr. Grote, it may be even probable—that the same poet who first sang the wrath of Achilleus afterwards inserted the exploits of Odysseus, Ajax, and Diomedes. The question is, after all, not material. If Mr. Grote is right in thinking that the last two books are an addition,<sup>2</sup> then the closing scene which exhibits Achilleus in his more genial aspect existed as a distinct poem, and the final complement of this lay is found far apart in the closing book of the *Odyssey*. The perfect harmony of that picture of the hero's death with the spirit and language of the *Achilléis* may be an argument for ascribing both *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to the same author;<sup>3</sup> but it seems to

<sup>1</sup> Both Colonel Mure and Mr. Gladstone search vigorously for every vestige of patriotism in the character of Achilleus. It is very hard to find any, and harder still to see any in the passages which they adduce. It does exist in Hector, and the reason why it should exist in him is manifest.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Greece*, vol. ii. p. 266.

<sup>3</sup> This is not the place to enter into the question relating to the unity of the *Odyssey*. As Mr. Grote insists, it is impossible to shut our eyes to the unity of plan which pervades the poem. In the *Iliad* we look in vain for any such unity, and are forced to strange shifts in order to establish a continuous unity of any kind. But it seems impossible to prove that no part even of the *Odyssey* ever existed in the form of separate lays. The tale of

furnish a much stronger warrant for asserting that more than one poet derived his inspiration from the mythical speech which, even in the Greek heroic age, still retained more than half its life. Nay, in the *Ilias* itself the legend of Meleagros, recited, it may be noted, by the same Phoinix who guarded Achilleus in his earlier years, exhibits still more forcibly the method in which phrases but partially understood, and incidents which had each received a local colouring and name, were wrought into the tales whether of the Calydonian chieftain, or Paris, or Achilleus. In times which even then were old, such phrases formed the common speech of the people; such incidents expressed the phenomena of their daily life; and this language was strictly the language of poetry, literally revelling in its boundless powers of creation and development. In almost every word lay the germ of an epic; it is the less wonderful, therefore, if each incident was embodied in a separate legend, or even reproduced in the independent tales of separate tribes. A hundred Homers may well have lit their torch from this living fire.

Nor can we well shut our eyes to the fact, that in the main story of the *Odyssey* the Homeric poet has set the same solar

Ground-work of  
the  
*Odyssey*.

the death of Achilleus seems to point to a different conclusion; and this may also be said of the longer lay of Demodocos and of the episode of the solar herds in Thrinakia (*Od. xii.*).

strain in another key. When Odysseus goes to Troy, he is simply a chieftain in the great host of Agamemnon, as Grimhildr aids Gunnar in his plots against Sigurdr. Regarded thus, he is himself of kin to the dark powers, the clouds and the winds, who veil the earth in gloom. But once taken to Troy, the army of the Achaians must be brought away again ; and if the poet was guided by the old idea, he would represent all of them as coming to an untimely end or dying by a violent death ; and this is the fate of most of them. But round the chieftain of each tribe would gather again all the ideas suggested by the ancient myths ; and the light reflected from the glory of the great Phthiotic hero might well rest on the head of Odysseus, as he turns to go from Ilion. Thus would begin a new career, not altogether unlike that of Heracles or Perseus. Throughout the whole poem, the one absorbing desire which fills the heart of Odysseus is to reach his home once more and see the wife whom he had been obliged to leave in the spring-time of his career, as Heracles was torn from Iolê. There are grievous toils and many hindrances on his way ; but nothing can turn him from his course. He has to fight, like Heracles and Perseus, Theseus and Bellerophon, with more than mortal beings and more than earthly powers, but he has the strength which they had to overcome or to evade them. It is true that he conquers chiefly by strength of will

and sagacity of mind; but this is again the phase which the idea of Helios, the great eye of day, as surveying and scanning everything, assumes in Medeia, Prometheus, Asclepios, Iamos, and Melampus. The other phase, however, is not wanting. He too has a bow which none but he can wield,<sup>1</sup> and he wields it to terrible purpose when, like Achilleus, after his time of disguise, he bursts on the astonished suitors, as the sun breaks from the storm-cloud before he sinks to rest. So, again, in his westward wanderings (for this is the common path of the children of Zeus or Helios), he must encounter fearful dangers. It is no unclouded sky which looks down on him as he journeys towards rocky Ithaca. He has to fight with Cyclopes and Læstrygonians, he has to shun the snares of the Seirens and the jaws of Skylla and Charybdis, as Perseus had to overcome the Gorgons and Theseus to do battle with the Minotauros. Yet there are times of rest for him, as for Heracles and Bellerophon. He yearns for the love of Penelope, but

<sup>1</sup> *Odyssey*, xxi. 405, κ. τ. λ. The phraseology of the poet here assumes, perhaps without his being fully aware of it, the same tone as that which tells of the arming of Achilleus. Others have tried with all their might to bend the bow. Odysseus stretches it without the least effort (*ἄτερ σπουδῆς*), and the sound of the string is like the whizzing of a swallow in its flight. In an instant every heart is filled with dread, and every cheek turns pale (*πᾶσι χρῶς ἔτράπετο*), and, to complete the imagery, they hear at the same moment the crash of thunder in the sky.

his grief can be soothed for a while by the affection of Kirkê and Calypso, as Achilleus found solace in that of Diomédê, and Heracles awhile in that of Déianeira. Nay, wherever he goes, mortal kings and chiefs and undying goddesses seek to make him tarry by their side, as Menelaos sought to retain Paris in his home by the side of the Spartan Helen, and as Gunnar strove to win Sigurdr to be the husband of his sister. So is it with Alkinoös; but, in spite of the loveliness and purity of Nausicaâ, Odysseus may not tarry in the happy land of the Phœakians, even as he might not tarry in the palace of the wise Kirkê or the sparkling cave of the gentle Calypso. At last he approaches his home, but he returns to it unknown and friendless. The sky is as dark as it was while Achilleus lay nursing his great wrath behind the veil of his sorrow. Still he too, like Achilleus, knows how to take vengeance on his enemies; and in stillness and silence he makes ready for the mortal conflict. His foes are many and strong, and, like Patroclos against Hector, Telemachos<sup>1</sup> can do but little against the suitors, in whom are reflected the Trojan enemies of the Achaians, the scowling storm-clouds, ready to rush like hounds on the wounded boar. But for him also, as for Achilleus, there is aid from the gods. Athénê, the daughter of the sky, cheers him on, and restores him to the

<sup>1</sup> Grote, History of Greece, vol. ii. p. 238.

glorious beauty of his youth, as Thetis clothed her child in the armour of Hephaistos and Apollo directed his spear against Hector. Still in his ragged beggar's dress, like the sun behind the rent and tattered clouds, he appears in his own hall on the day of doom. The old bow is taken down from the wall, and none but he can be found to stretch it. His enemies begin to fear that the chief has indeed returned to his home, and they crouch in terror before the stranger, as the Trojans quailed at the mere sight and war-cry of Achilleus. But their cry for mercy falls as vain as that of Lycaon or Hector, who must die to avenge the dead Patroclos, as the doom of the suitors is come for the wrongs which they have done to Penelope. The fatal bow is stretched. The arrows fly deadly and unerring as the spear of Artemis, and the hall is bathed in blood. There is nothing to stay his arm until all are dead. The sun-god is taking vengeance on the clouds and trampling them down in his fury. The work is done ; and Penelope sees in Odysseus the husband who had left her long ago to face his toils like Heracles and Perseus. But she will try him still. If indeed he be the same, he will know his bridal chamber and the beautiful robes which his own hands had wrought. Iolê will try whether Heracles remembers the beautiful network of violet clouds which he spread as her couch in the morning. The sun is setting

in peace. Penelope, fair as Œnôné and as pure (for no touch of defilement must pass on her, or on Iolê, or Daphnê, or Brisêis), is once again by his side. The darkness is utterly scattered ; the corpses of the suitors and of the handmaidens who ministered to them cumber the hall no more. A few flying vapours rush at random along the sky, as the men of Ithaca raise a feeble clamour in behalf of the slain chieftains. Soon these too are gone. Penelope and Odysseus are within their bridal chamber. Œnôné has gone to rest with Paris by her side ; but there is no gloom in the house of Odysseus, and the hero lives still, strong and beautiful as in the early days. The battle is over. The one yearning of his heart has been fulfilled. The sun has laid him down to rest

In one unclouded blaze of living light.

But unless the marvellous resemblance (may it not be said, the identity ?) of the Greek, the Trojan, and the Teutonic epics can be explained away, it follows that in Achilleus and in Paris, in Meleagros and Sigurdr, in Ragnar Lodbrog and Theseus, in Perseus, Heracles, Bellerophon, and Odysseus, we have pictures drawn from the same ideal as regarded under its several aspects. It mattered not which of these aspects the poet might choose for his theme. In each case he had more than the frame-

How much of the Iliad or Odyssey belongs to the invention of the poet?

work of his story made ready to his hand. The departure of Achilleus from his own land to fight in a quarrel which was not his own—the transfer of the spoils won by him to a chief of meaner spirit than his own—his unerring spear and immortal horses—the robbery of Brisēis or Hippodameia—the fierce wrath of Achilleus, which yet could leave room for the love of another in her place—the sullen inaction from which he refuses to be roused—the dismay of the Achaians and the exultation of the Trojans at his absence from the fight—the partial glory spread over the scene by the appearance of Patroclos, only to close in the deeper gloom which followed his overthrow—the fury of Achilleus behind the dark cloud of his sorrow—the sudden outburst of the hero, armed with his resistless spear and clad in armour more dazzling than that which he had lost—the invincible might which deals death to Hector and his comrades—the blood which streams from the human victims on his altar of sacrifice—his forgiveness of Agamemnon for that which Agamemnon of himself would have been powerless to do—the warning of his own early death which he receives from the horse Xanthos—the battle of the gods, as they take part in the storm which rages in the heavens and on the earth—the swelling of the waters, their brief mastery over the hero, their conquest by fire—the generous splendour

which follows the accomplishment of his vengeance—the sudden close of his brilliant but brief career—the fierce battle fought over his dead body, are incidents which the poet might introduce or omit at will, but the spirit of which he was not free to alter. The character of Achilleus was no more his own creation than the shifting scenes in the great drama of his life. The idea of his picture no more originated in himself than the idea of Sigurdr in the mind of the more rugged poet of the North. The materials were not of his own making; and the words of Mr. Gladstone acquire a stronger meaning, though not the meaning which he designed to convey, when, insisting that there must be a foundation for the Homeric theogony and for the chief incidents in the war of Troy, he said that poets may embellish, but they cannot invent.<sup>1</sup> Their course was marked out for them,

<sup>1</sup> Homer and the Homeric Age, vol. ii. p. 10.

The great epic of Virgil raises a distinct question, on which I must not here enter. It is, however, manifest that epic poetry, composed in a time of highly artificial civilisation, stands on a wholly different ground from the true epic of a simple age, the growth of generations from the myth-making talk of the people. The tradition which brought *Aeneas* to Italy was not of Virgil's making; and in taking him for his hero, he bound himself to give the sequel of a career which had been begun in the *Iliad*. Nor is it without significance that *Aeneas*, like *Odyssaeus*, moves from east to west, fighting, with whatever success, against the powers of the air and sea. His visit to the shades below may have been directly suggested by the poems which Virgil had before him as his model; but it must have been a genuine tra-

but the swiftness with which each ran his race depended on his own power. The genius of the Homeric poets was shown, not in the creation of their materials, but in the truthful and magnificent colouring which they throw over a legend which, in weaker hands, might exhibit but a tinsel glitter.

But if there is this affinity between the character of the Achaian and the Teutonic heroes, it follows that that character is neither strictly Achaian nor strictly Teutonic. It cannot be regarded as expressing the real morality either of the one or of the other. Any attempt to criticise them as genuine pictures of national character<sup>1</sup> must be fol-

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dition which led Virgil to tell how he left Creusa, as Heracles left Iolé, and as Ariadne was deserted by Theseus. So, again, in the war with Turnus for the possession of Lavinia is reflected the war at Troy for Helen, and the contest in the Odyssey with the enemies who strive to win the rightful bride of Odysseus. In this war Æneas, like other solar heroes, is successful, and like them, after his victory, which is followed by a time of tranquil happiness, he plunges into the Numician stream, as Kephalos and Bellerophon sink to sleep in the western waters of the Leucadian gulf.

The same type reappears in Romulus; and the key is found to his legendary history as well as to that of Cyrus, of Chandragupta, and of the progenitor of the Turks. All these tales repeat the exposure of the infant Oedipus, or Telephos, or Iamos, or Alexandros. See further the Tale of the Persian War, p. 318, note 2. The same myth is seen under another aspect in the legend of Servius Tullius.

<sup>1</sup> The wish to base his criticism on this foundation has led

lowed by that feeling of repulsion which Mr. Dasent openly avows for the Greek mythology,

Mr. Gladstone to assume, without evidence, that the cause of Achilleus was substantially that of right and justice, and that the apology made by Agamemnon in Il. xix. 67 is essentially different from the apology made in ix. 120. But, in the first place, it is difficult to see that 'justice is' more 'outraged in the person of Achilleus' (Homer &c. vol. iii. p. 370) than it is in the person of Agamemnon. If the former is compelled to part with Briseis, the latter has also been obliged to give up the daughter of Chryses, for whom, with a plainness of speech not used either by Achilleus or even by Paris in deserting Oenone, he avows his preference over his wedded wife Clytemnestra (Il. i. 110). Moreover, the taking of Briseis is the sole act of Agamemnon, in which his councillors and the people take no part. Yet Mr. Gladstone holds it to be a 'deadly wrong,' justifying Achilleus in visiting his wrath on an army which had nothing whatever to do with it. The truth is, that, by an analysis of this kind, we may prove that Achilleus was mad, but we can never show that his character was either common or even known among the Achaians. The mere sufferings of Agamemnon must be allowed to be at least equal to those of Odysseus, unless we adopt a code which would better befit the Confederate slave-owners than Englishmen; but it is almost a slander on Agamemnon to say that his apology 'comes first in his faltering speech' given in Il. xix. 67. If there he says

*Ἴψ θέλω ἀρέσαι, δόμενα τ' ἀπερεῖστις κποια,*

he had said precisely the same thing in Il. ix. 120, &c., and there also confesses that he had been infatuated. In fact, Mr. Gladstone is furnishing conclusive evidence in proof of the assertion that the writer of the nineteenth book knew nothing of the ninth. But it is hard to yield a self-chosen position; and Mr. Gladstone therefore holds that the apology of the former book is a valid atonement, although it is, word for word, the same as that which is contained in the latter. The very fact that

and which he also feels in part for the Teutonic. In either case, his moral indignation is thrown

Achilleus is so ready, and even eager, to visit on the whole army the sin of the individual Agamemnon, shows how utterly destitute his character is of real patriotism. If anything more were needed to exhibit the falsity of such critical methods, it would be furnished by Colonel Mure's remarks that the aim of Homer is not to show, with Mr. Gladstone, the justice of the cause of Achilleus, but to prove that both he and Agamemnon were equally in the wrong (*Crit. Hist. Gr. Lit.* vol. i. p. 277). Both sides are equally deserving of blame: the one must be punished, the other convinced of his folly. This is the result of taking Homer to be a moral philosopher or preacher who, to adopt Mr. Gladstone's favourite Horatian motto, tells us all about human life and duty much better than Chrysippus and Crantor. Indeed, there seems to be no limit to violent interpretations of the text of Homer, if any such hypothesis is to be entertained. It is Mr. Gladstone's belief that the last book of the *Iliad* was added to show that Achilleus 'must surrender the darling object of his desire, the wreaking of his vengeance on an inanimate corpse' (*Homer &c.* vol. iii. p. 395). His ambition might, perhaps, have been more dignified; but, such as it was, it had surely been gratified already. If he was not contented with tying the body to his chariot-wheels and dragging it about till every feature was disfigured, what more did he want? The whole of this moral criticism of epic characters is ludicrously out of place; and such criticism can be applied least of all, as a means of determining national character, to the hero who (in order to beat Hector, in every respect, as Mr. Gladstone asserts, his inferior) is made invulnerable, like Baldr and Rustem, in all parts but the heel, and, clad in armour wrought by Hephaistos, wields a spear (guaranteed never to miss its mark) against an enemy, who, acknowledging his inferiority, yet faces him from the high motive of patriotism and duty, and whom he is unable to overcome except by the aid of Athéné and after he has been deserted by Apollo.

away. There was, doubtless, quite enough evil in the character of the Norseman and the Greek; but it never assumed that aspect which is common to the great heroes of their epic poetry. We look in vain elsewhere for an instance of the same unbounded wrath arising from a cause which the Achaian would be rather disposed to treat too lightly, of an inaction which cares not though all around him die, of a bloody vengeance on meaner enemies when his great foe has been vanquished, of the awful sacrifice of human victims—a sacrifice, even in the heroic age, completely alien to the general character of the Achaians. But every one of these characteristics is at once exhaustively explained, when they are compared with those of all the other great legendary heroes. The grave attempt to judge them by a reference to the ordinary standard of Greek, or rather of Christian and modern morality, has imparted to the criticism of Colonel Mure an air almost of burlesque. In his analysis of the Iliad, the motives which sway Achilleus are taken to pieces as seriously as if he were examining the conduct of Themistocles or Archidamos. It might be well to speak of the ‘defective principles of heroic morality;’<sup>1</sup> of the sarcasms of Achilleus against Agamemnon, in the first book, as ‘unwarranted at this stage of the discussion;’<sup>2</sup> of the

<sup>1</sup> Crit. Hist. Gr. Lit. vol. i. p. 275.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 277.

'respectful deference to the sovereign will of Agamemnon' as a duty 'inculcated by the poet,' and 'scrupulously fulfilled by the other chiefs,'<sup>1</sup> if the poet, in Mr. Grote's words, were telling us of a Trojan war 'without gods, without heroes, without Helen, without Amazons, without Ethiopians under the beautiful son of Eôs.'<sup>2</sup> Colonel Mure lays great stress on the 'ethic unity' with which the incidental references to the early death of Achilleus invest the whole poem, and he finds a deep 'knowledge of human nature' 'in the adaptation to each other of the characters of the hero and his friend,' where Mr. Grote sees little more than a reflection.<sup>3</sup> But his anxiety to exalt the character of Achilleus has led him, in one instance of no slight moment, to vilify unduly that of his antagonist. 'The proudest exploit of Hector, his slaughter and spoliation of Patroclos, is so described as to be conspicuous only for its ferocity. The Greek hero, after being disabled by Apollo, is mortally wounded by another Trojan, when Hector steps in with the finishing blow, as his butcher rather than conqueror.'<sup>4</sup> If it be to the disparagement of Hector that he should have the aid of a god, the poet is not the less careful in saying that Achilleus could not slay Hector until Phœbus

<sup>1</sup> Crit. Hist. Gr. Lit. vol. i. p. 278.

<sup>2</sup> History of Greece, vol. i. p. 434.      <sup>3</sup> Ibid. vol. ii. p. 238.

<sup>4</sup> Crit. Hist. Gr. Lit. vol. i. p. 28

Apollo had deserted him. But if Colonel Mure anxiously seeks out apologies for the wrath,<sup>1</sup> the inaction, and the furious revenge of the hero, his criticism utterly fails to explain the very incidents which seem most deeply to have impressed him. It does not explain why he should choose inaction as the mode of avenging himself against Agamemnon. It does not show *why*, during his absence, ‘the gods had, at his own request, decreed victory to Hector, rout and slaughter to the Greeks’<sup>2</sup>—why in him ‘no affection, amiable or the reverse,’ should ‘exist but in overpowering excess’<sup>3</sup>—why he should be ‘soothed by the fulfilment of his duties as mourner,’ why the games should ‘usher in an agreeable change,’ or why ‘we should part with Achilles at the moment best calculated to exalt and purify our impression of his character.’<sup>4</sup> Still less does it explain why, before the final struggle, the gods should be let loose to take whichever side they might prefer. Colonel Mure seems to imply that they were all sent to take the part of the Trojans.<sup>5</sup> Mr. Grote, with a far keener discernment of the character of this part of the poem, insists that ‘that which chiefly distinguishes these books is the direct, incessant, and manual intervention of the gods and goddesses, formally permitted by Zeus, and the

<sup>1</sup> Crit. Hist. Gr. Lit. vol. i. p. 284.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 287.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 289.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 291.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 288.

repetition of vast and fantastic conceptions to which each superhuman agency gives occasion, not omitting the battle of Achilles against Skamander and Simois, and the burning up of these rivers by Hephaestus.' In his judgment this interference mars the poem and 'somewhat vulgarises' the gods.<sup>1</sup> But, while he thinks that the poet has failed in a task where success was impossible, he has not explained why the poet should feel himself compelled to undertake it.

But if Mr. Gladstone strains every effort to save the character of Achilleus, Colonel Mure is not less zealous in behalf of the chieftain of Ithaca. If Achilleus 'represents the grandeur of the heroic character as reflected in the very excess of its noblest attributes,' Odysseus, in his belief, 'represents its virtue, possessing as he does, in greater number and higher degree than any other chief, the qualities which in that age constituted the accomplished king and citizen.'<sup>2</sup> The matter is brought to a plain issue. The Odyssey is 'a rich picture-gallery of human life as it existed in that age and country,'<sup>3</sup> and we are to see in Odysseus a favourable specimen of the manners and habits of his people. It is quite possible, by Colonel Mure's method, so to represent him. But if we speak of him as one whose

The cha-  
racter of  
Odys-  
seus.

<sup>1</sup> History of Greece, vol. ii. p. 264.

<sup>2</sup> Crit. Hist. Gr. Lit. vol. i. p. 391.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 389

' habitual prudence was modified, or even at times overcome, by his thirst for glory and by an eager pursuit of the marvellous'<sup>1</sup>—if we say that he never uttered an untruth or practised a manœuvre for a base object<sup>2</sup>—if we speak of him as inculcating in his adventures 'the duty incumbent on the most vigorous minds, not only to resist but to avoid temptation '<sup>3</sup>—are we really speaking of the Odysseus of Homer? If such a method may account for some features in his character, will it in the least explain his character as bound up with the whole structure of the poem? Will it not leave the groundwork of the tale and its issue a greater mystery than ever? Will it explain why Odysseus, like Heracles and Philoctetes, should use poisoned arrows<sup>4</sup>—why, without scruple, he should tell lies while he desires to remain unrecognised, why he should never depart from the truth when speaking in his own character—why he hesitates not to lurk in ambush for an unarmed man,<sup>5</sup> and stab him behind his back, and speak of the deed without shame—why

<sup>1</sup> Crit. Hist. Gr. Lit. vol. i. p. 393.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 395.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 403.

<sup>4</sup> Odyssey, i. 263. Dr. Thirlwall (*History of Greece*, vol. i. p. 182) refers to this passage as showing the 'manifest disapprobation' of the poet. It is, at the least, very faintly expressed. Zeus, possibly as being above law, gives the poison, and Athéné sees no harm in his so doing.

<sup>5</sup> Odyssey, xiii. 260.

he should wish to pry into everything in heaven or on earth, or in the dark land beneath the earth<sup>1</sup>—why nothing less than the slaughter of all his enemies will satiate a wrath not much more reasonable than that of Achilleus? Still more: will it explain why Penelope weaves and unweaves her web—why, when Odysseus returns, she is restored by Athénê, the daughter of the sky, to all her early loveliness,<sup>2</sup> while on him rests once more all the splendour of his ancient majesty—why the nurse who recognises him should be Eurykleia,<sup>3</sup> and the maiden who reviles him should be Melantho<sup>4</sup>—why his dog Argos, although forsaken and untended, retains something of his former beauty and at once recognises his old master<sup>5</sup>—why, when Penelope wishes to speak with him on

<sup>1</sup> The visit of Odysseus to the shades carries us to the singular threat of Hyperion, when he tells Zeus that, if the theft of his cows be not avenged, he will go down and shine among the dead (*Od.* xii. 383). Shelley faithfully represents the spirit of the old phrase when, in his *Hymn of Apollo*, he says,

‘My footsteps pave the clouds with fire: the eaves  
Are filled with my bright presence.’

<sup>2</sup> *Od.* xviii. 192.

<sup>3</sup> *Od.* xvii. 31. In the name of her father Autolykos we have again the same word which gave rise to the story of Lyeaon and to the meaning which Aeschylus attached to the name of Phœbus, the Lykian-born (*λύκειος, λυκηγενής*).

<sup>4</sup> *Od.* xviii. 321. We see the process by which the force of the old mythical language was weakened and lost, when the poet speaks of Melantho as *καλλιπάρησ*.

<sup>5</sup> *Od.* xvii. 300.

his return, she is charged to wait till the evening<sup>1</sup>—why in his wanderings he should fight not so much with human enemies as with mighty beings and monsters of the earth and sea—why his long voyage and the time of gloomy disguise should be followed by a triumph so full of blood, ending with a picture of such serene repose?

In truth, the character of Odysseus was not, in any greater degree than that of Achilleus, an original creation of the Homeric poet. In all its main features it came down ready to his hand. His wisdom is the wisdom of Athénê and Prometheus and Medeia, of Iamos and Asclépios and Melampus; his craft is the craft of Hermes, his keen intellect is the piercing eye of Helios, and from Helios comes the strange inquisitiveness which must pry into everything that comes in his path.<sup>2</sup> If he uses poisoned arrows, it is not because Achaian chieftains were in the habit of using them, but because the weapons of Heracles were steeped in venom and the robe of Medeia scorched the body of Glaukê. If he submits to the love of Kirkê and Calypso, it is because Achilleus solaced himself with Diomédê for the loss of Briséis, and Heracles awhile forgot his sorrows in the house of Déianeira.

How far  
was the  
character  
of Odys-  
seus a  
creation  
of the  
Homeric  
poet?

<sup>1</sup> Od. xvii. 582.

<sup>2</sup> This inquisitiveness is especially seen in the episodes of the Cyclops and the Seirens.

If he can be a secret stabber, it is not because the heroic ideal could stoop to such baseness, but because Phœbus can smite secretly as well as slay openly, and because it matters not whether the victim be but one man or the fifty who fall by the spear of Bellerophon. If at the end he smites all his enemies, it is not because they have committed an offence which, according to the standard of the age, would deserve such punishment, but because the wrath of Achilleus could only be appeased by the blood of his enemies, as the blazing sun tramples on the dark clouds beneath his feet. We may be well assured that such as these were not the habits of the men who dwelt at Tiryns or in Ithaca—that such as these were not the characteristics of the chieftains who ruled in Mykēnæ. But if the character of Odysseus is not strictly Achaian, so, like that of Achilleus, it is not, in strictness of speech, human. Mr. Grote has truly said that the aim of the poet is not ethical or didactic either in the Iliad or the Odyssey,<sup>1</sup> and an examination of the latter poem scatters to the winds all fancies which see in

<sup>1</sup> History of Greece, vol. ii. p. 278. Horace draws but a feeble moral when he says of the Iliad,

'Quidquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.'

Ep. i. 2, 14.

But that this should be the case is perfectly explained by the growth of mythology. The wrath of beings like Achilleus and Odysseus is wide-spreading and indiscriminate.

Odysseus an image of the Christian warrior fighting the good fight of faith, yet yearning for his rest in heaven.<sup>1</sup> The ideal is indeed magnificent, and it has never been more magnificently realised, but it is not the ideal either of Christianity or even of humanity; it is the life of the sun. At the outset of his return from the East, Odysseus has to encounter superhuman foes; and the discomfiture of the Cyclops rouses the wrath of the sea-god Poseidon, as the clouds rise from the waters and curl round the rising sun. Still Zeus is on his side, and Poseidon himself shall not be able to cut short his course,<sup>2</sup> though all his

<sup>1</sup> This higher aim is especially attributed to the poet by the Rev. Isaac Williams, in 'The Christian Scholar,' p. 115, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Od. i. 80. The influence of Polyphēmos on the fortunes of Odysseus curiously perplexes Colonel Mure, who sees in it the chief defect of the Odyssey, as interfering with the 'retributive equity' which he fancies that he finds in the Iliad. 'No reader of taste or judgment,' he thinks, 'can fail to experience in its perusal a certain feeling of impatience, not only that the destinies of a blameless hero and an innocent woman, but that any important trains of events, should hinge on so offensive a mechanism as the blind affection of a mighty deity for so odious a monster as Polyphemus' (Crit. Hist. Gr. Lit. vol. ii. p. 151). Nothing could show more clearly than these words Colonel Mure's inability to enter fairly into the spirit of Greek mythology. It was simply impossible that the poet could make use of any other mechanism. The train of events which he recounts is not the sequence of any human life, but the career of Helios and Daphnē, of Alexandros and CEnōnē.

The Cyclops is, according to Homer, the son of Poseidon, the

comrades should fall by the way, as the morning clouds may be scattered before the noonday. But while he moves steadily towards his home, that home is dark and gloomy. There the sun is hidden, and only from time to time a faint glory breaks from the sky as Telemachos strives to maintain the honour of his father's house.<sup>1</sup> So Penelope remains quiet in her home. Forbidding forms crowd around her, but her purity remains unsullied. The web begun is never ended; the fairy tracery of morning clouds cannot reappear until the evening. There are others too who have not forgotten the hero, and Eurycleia seeks to retain Telemachos when he would go forth to

god of the sea—in other words, the exhalations which form themselves into the hideous storm-clouds, through which the sun sometimes glares down like a huge eye in the midst of the black forehead of the giant. Mr. Kelly, therefore, mistakes the eye, which really belongs to the sun, for the Cyclops himself, when he says, ‘The Greek mythology shows us a whole people of suns in the Cyclops, giants with one eye round as a wheel in their foreheads.’ He is right in adding that ‘they were akin to the heavenly giants, and dwelt with the Phœaciens, the navigators of the cloud-sea in the broad Hypereia, the upper land, i. e. heaven, until the legend transplanted them both to the western horizon’ (Indo-European Folk-lore, p. 32).

<sup>1</sup> I must again refer to Mr. Grote's remarks on the merely secondary character of Telemachos (History of Greece, vol. ii. p. 238). The name Telemachos comes from the far-darting rays of the sun, like that of Telephassa. The dawn is always described under names expressive of wide-spreading splendour, as Euryphaëssa, Euryganeia, and Eurycleia, the nurse of Odysseus.

seek his father.<sup>1</sup> But he cannot stay. The slant rays vanish from the sky, and the house of Laertes is shadowed with deeper gloom. Meanwhile Odysseus is hastening on. For a while he tarries with Kirkē and Calypso, and makes a longer sojourn in the house of Alkinoös, even as Paris abode many months in Sparta. The Phœakian chieftain would have him stay for ever. His land is fair as summer; but the seasons may not tarry, and Odysseus cannot abide there even with Nausicaâ. So he hastens home, sometimes showing his might, as the sun breaks for a moment through a rift in the clouds; but the darkness is greatest when he lands on his own shores. He is surrounded by enemies and spies, and he takes refuge in craft and falsehood.<sup>2</sup> The darkness itself must aid him to win the victory, and Athénê takes all beauty from his face and all brightness from his golden hair.<sup>3</sup> These, with all the other ideas which had come down to him as a fruitful heritage from the language of his remote forefathers, the Homeric poet might recombine or develope, but if he brought

<sup>1</sup> Od. ii. 365.

<sup>2</sup> Od. xiii. 255, κ. τ. λ.

<sup>3</sup> Od. xiii. 431. The language adheres even more closely to the myth. His locks are actually destroyed—

ξανθὰς ἐκ κεφαλῆς ὅλεσε τρίχας.

Those which she gave him when she restored his beauty would be strictly the new rays bursting from behind the clouds.

him to Ithaca under a cloud, he could not but say that Athénê took away his glory, while yet his dog Argos, the same hound who crouches at the feet of Artemis or drives the herds of the sun to their pastures, knows his old master in all his squalid raiment, and dies for joy at seeing him.<sup>1</sup> When on his return Telemachos asks whether the bridal couch of Odysseus is covered with spider's webs, he could not but say in reply that Penelope still remained faithful to her only love;<sup>2</sup> and when Telemachos is once more to see his father, he could not but make Athénê restore him to more than his ancient beauty.<sup>3</sup> So the man of many toils and wanderings returns to his home,<sup>4</sup> only to find that his son is unable to rule his house,<sup>5</sup> as Phaethon and Patroclós were alike unable to guide the horses of Helios. Still Penelope is fair as Artemis or Aphrodítē,<sup>6</sup> although Melantho and Melanthios,<sup>7</sup> the black children of the crafty (Dolios) Night, strive to dash her life with gloom, and Odysseus stands a squalid beggar in his own hall.<sup>8</sup> Thenceforth the poet's path was still more distinctly marked. He must make the arm of Odysseus irresistible,<sup>9</sup> he must make Athénê aid him in

<sup>1</sup> Od. xvii. 327.

<sup>2</sup> Od. xvi. 35.

<sup>3</sup> Od. xvi. 175.

<sup>4</sup> Od. i. 2; xvi. 205.

<sup>5</sup> Od. xvi. 256.

<sup>6</sup> Od. xvii. 37.

<sup>7</sup> Od. xvii. 212; xviii. 320.

<sup>8</sup> Od. xvii. 363.

<sup>9</sup> Od. xviii. 95.

storing up weapons for the conflict,<sup>1</sup> as Thetis brought the armour of Hephaistos to Achilleus; he must make Penelope tell Odysseus how often she had woven and undone her web while he tarried so long away.<sup>2</sup> When Penelope asks tidings of Odysseus, the poet could not but give an answer in which the flash of gold and blaze of purple carry us directly to the arming of Achilleus.<sup>3</sup> As Eurykleia, the old nurse, tends him at the bath, he must make her recognise the wound made by the wild boar<sup>4</sup> who wrought the death of the fair Adonis, and tell how her foster-child came to be called Odysseus.<sup>5</sup> Then, as the day of doom is

<sup>1</sup> Od. xix. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Od. xix. 140. Penelope is the weaver of the web (*πήνη*) of cirri clouds.

In his recent work on the Curiosities of Indo-European Tradition and Folk-lore, Mr. Kelly, summing up the general characteristics of Aryan mythology, says, ‘Light clouds were webs spun and woven by celestial women, who also drew water from the fountains on high and poured it down as rain. The yellow light gleaming through the clouds was their golden hair. A fast-scudding cloud was a horse flying from its pursuers. . . . In all this and much more of the same kind, there was not yet an atom of that symbolism which has commonly been assumed as the starting-point of all mythology. The mythic animals, for example, were, for those who first gave them their names, no mere images or figments of the mind. They were downright realities, for they were seen by men who were quick to see, and who had not yet learned to suspect any collusion between their eyes and their fancy’ (p. 8).

<sup>3</sup> Od. xix. 225.

<sup>4</sup> Od. xix. 393.

<sup>5</sup> Od. xix. 201. The origin of this name, as of so many others,

ushered in, he must relate how the lightning flashed from the sky,<sup>1</sup> and the rumour went abroad that the chieftain was come again to his home. So Penelope takes down the bow which Iphitos, the mighty, had given to Odysseus,<sup>2</sup> and bids the suitors stretch it; but they cannot, and there is no need that Telemachos should waste his strength now that his father has come home.<sup>3</sup> Then follows the awful tragedy. Zeus must thunder as the beggar seizes the bow.<sup>4</sup> The suitors begin to fall beneath the unerring arrows; but the victory is not to be won without a struggle. Telemachos has left the chamber

is wrongly accounted for; but the explanation is right in so far as it retains the idea of gloomy anger. Odysseus is the angry sun who hides his face behind the clouds, not the man who, like Autolykos, is hated by others for his craft and falsehood. A more curious instance of misinterpretation is the explanation given by Sophocles of the name Οδίπος, from the swelling of the ankle caused by tight bandaging (Οδ. Tyr. 1033-5). If the poet is right in referring it to *ολέω* at all, the idea conveyed by it is that of the swelling of the sun as it rises from a point of light to a full circle above the horizon. As this swelling is at the base, it might have originated the notion which connected the swelling with the feet of Οδίπος. The swelling of the sun may, however, belong as strictly to the time of his setting as of his rising; and it is so understood by M. Bréal. It would thus signify his dilating form as he approaches the horizon, as the other idea would express his growth from a point of light when he left it in the morning.

<sup>1</sup> Od. xx. 105.

<sup>2</sup> Od. xxi. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Od. xxi. 130.

<sup>4</sup> Od. xxi. 413.

door ajar, and the enemy arm themselves with the weapons which they find there.<sup>1</sup> It is but another version of the battle which Achilleus fought with Scamandros and Simoeis in the war of elements; and as then the heart of Achilleus almost failed him, so wavers now the courage of Odysseus.<sup>2</sup> For a moment the dark clouds seem to be gaining mastery over the sun. But Athénê comes to his aid,<sup>3</sup> as before she had come to help Achilleus, and the arrows of the suitors are in vain aimed at the hero,<sup>4</sup> although Telemachos is wounded,<sup>5</sup> though not to the death like Patroclos. Yet more, Athénê must show her *Ægis*,<sup>6</sup> dazzling as the face of the unclouded sun; and when the victory is won, the corpses of the slain must be thrust away,<sup>7</sup> like the black vapours driven from the sky. Only for Melanthios he reserves the full measure of indignity which Achilleus wreaked on the body of the dead Hector.<sup>8</sup> Then follows the recognition in which, under another form, Procris again meets Kephalos and Iolê once more rejoices the heart of Heracles. For a little while the brightness rests on Laertes, and the old man's limbs again grow strong;<sup>9</sup> but the strength comes from Athénê.<sup>9</sup>

The progress of comparative mythology, with

<sup>1</sup> Od. xxii. 141.

<sup>2</sup> Od. xxii. 147.

<sup>3</sup> Od. xxii. 205.

<sup>4</sup> Od. xxii. 257.

<sup>5</sup> Od. xxii. 277.

<sup>6</sup> Od. xxii. 297.

<sup>7</sup> Od. xxii. 460.

<sup>8</sup> Od. xxii. 475.

<sup>9</sup> Od. xxiv. 367.

that of the science of language, must throw fresh light on the original construction of the great Greek epics; but important and full of interest as the question is, it cannot even be touched on here. Yet one conclusion, at the least, is forced upon us, and Odysseus is found to be as much and as little an Achaian chieftain as Achilleus or Meleagros. The poems remain, as they were, a mine of wealth for all who seek to find in them pictures of the manners and social life of the heroic ages; but all the great chiefs are removed beyond a criticism which starts with attributing to them the motives which influence mankind under any circumstances whatsoever.

Thus the Greek, Scandinavian, and Hindoo epics, the tales told of Hellenic and Teutonic gods and heroes, alike point to one common source from whence all the thousand streams of mythology have diverged. They carry us back to ages dimly seen through the mists of a hoar antiquity; and yet that age is as real a portion of the world's history as is our own. It is beyond the daring of the boldest sceptic to deny the close kindred between the grammars of the Greek and the Sanskrit languages; and the same Titanic assurance would be needed to call into question the identity, in their essence and in their chief features, of the Sanskrit and Greek

The character of Odysseus not Achaian.

The common source of Greek and Norse mythology.

mythology. If, then, the Greek said that Apollo loved Daphnē, and the Aryan of the Five Streams said that Indra pursued Dahanâ—if the latter would say

Dyaús me pitā' ganitā,

where the former said

Ζεὺς ἐμοῦ πατήρ γενετήρ,<sup>1</sup>—

we can assign their true value to off-hand assertions, mischievous only because they may mislead the ignorant, that the Aryan race itself, dispersed or undispersed, is but a creature of the German imagination. The name of that race is a matter of but little moment; yet we have the indisputable fact that certain branches of the one common stock (whatever it may have been called) drew as sharp a line between Aryan and non-Aryan tribes, as ever the Greek drew between Hellén and barbarian. The Persian has his Iran and An-iran; the Zoroastrian contrasted *viśpem airyō-sayanem*, the Aryan regions, with those that lay without, *anairyō dainhāvō*;<sup>2</sup> and in all that relates to this ancient stock, from which we as well as they are sprung, there is for us, although we may not heed it, a direct and personal interest. Nor, if only we rightly define its limits, is our knowledge of that race uncertain. We know not only their

<sup>1</sup> Max Müller, Comp. Myth. p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Max Müller, Lectures on the Science of Language, p. 227 (First Series).

thoughts on the sights and sounds of the visible world, as declared in their mythical speech and in the more definite legends of later ages; but we also know something of their ways and their doings, from a witness whose testimony we dare not ignore. We know that they were not a brutish or degraded race. We know that they had fixed dwellings, that the relations of father and mother, of son and daughter, brother and sister, were as familiar to them as to us. We know that they were tillers of the earth and builders of boats, that they had a knowledge of numbers, and recognised property and law.<sup>1</sup> Nor does our knowledge end here. The mere analysis of language will lead us to historical facts. The common word for a shoe proves that the English and German tribes had ceased to walk barefooted before their ways diverged; the difference of their words for stockings shows that these were a later acquisition. This is as much an historical fact as the discovery of gunpowder; and all that need be said further is that (as in geology) we are dealing with approximate dates, in which it is beyond our power to determine more than the sequence of events. We cannot say when the first or last Sanskrit hymn of the Chandas period was composed; but we can as little deny the fact of their

<sup>1</sup> Max Müller, Lectures on the Science of Language, p. 199 (First Series).

composition as we can call into question the fact of a thermal or a glacial period in geological history. Within these limits we may confidently hope to increase our knowledge of that old time. The stream, whose sands have already rewarded our search with so much gold, will most assuredly yield more.

And if the examination of the most complicated epic poetry has disclosed precisely the framework

Explanation of the seeming immorality of Aryan mythology. which we find even in the most fragmentary legends<sup>1</sup>—if we have seen that Theseus and Sigurdr, and Phaethon and Phœbus, and Paris and Achilleus, are, though different,

<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to determine the aid which Comparative Mythology might have received from the lost poems of the epic cycle. There can, however, be little doubt that they would have made still more evident the truth of facts which, even without them, seem to be indisputably established. We might also with their aid have been better able to measure exactly the knowledge which the poets of the Iliad and Odyssey had of legends which they have not mentioned or have treated only incidentally. The epic poem which had for its subject simply the capture of Æchalia by Heracles, the Danais, the Eurōpia, might have added to our knowledge of the materials with which all these poems were built up. The Iliad and Odyssey have assumed in our eyes more than their fair proportions from the mere fact that they alone have survived unhurt the wear and tear of ages. On the whole Grecian epic, see Grote, History of Greece, Part I. ch. xxi.

The so-called Orphic hymns consist almost entirely of invocations to the various beings with which the old mythical language peopled the visible world, followed by a string of all the epithets which were held to be applicable to them. Almost every one of these epithets may be made the germ of a mythical tale. Thus the

yet the same—if we see that their adventures or their times of inaction are simply the fruit of an inevitable process going on in all kindred languages—all charges of immorality founded on the character of these adventures fall more completely to the ground. It is simply impossible to believe that the great Athenian poets were descended from a people who, some centuries before, had deliberately sat down to invent the most loathsome or the most ridiculous fictions about the gods whom they worshipped and the heroes whom they revered. To the mind of Æschylus, there was a depth of almost inexpiable guilt in the sacrifice of Iphigeneia. The imagination of Sophocles was oppressed by the unconscious incest of Oedipus and all its frightful consequences, hymn to Protagonos (who reappears as Protogeneia) hails him as born from the egg (of night), and having the face of a bull (Indra), as Phanes, the brilliant, and Antaugēs, reflecting the light of the sun (vi.). Helios (viii.) is Paian, the healer, merging into the idea of Asclepios; he is also Zeus—a relic of the interchangeable character of the earlier Vedic gods, the moon being also still male and female (ix.). Heracles (xii.) is the father of Time, benignant and everlasting, producing and devouring all things, yet helping all, wearing the dawn and the night round his head. Adonis (lvi.) dwells partly in Tartarus and partly on Olympus. The rays of the sun and moon cannot come without the Charites (lx.) (the Harits, or horses of Indra). Asclepios is Paian (the healer) as well as Helios, and he has Health as his spotless bride. The date of these hymns is a matter of little moment. To whatever age they may belong, they lay bare not a few of the stages in the mythopeic process.

while Pindar turned aside with almost contemptuous indignation from the stories which told of gods devouring their own offspring. But we, to whom the tale of Cronos points to time which consumes the years to which it has given birth—we, for whom the early doom of the virgin Iphigeneia, caused by the wrath of Artemis, is a mere reflection of the lot which pressed alike on Dahanâ and Daphnê, on Iolê and CEnônê—we, who can read in the woful tale of Iocastê the return of the lord of day, the slayer of the Sphinx and the Python, to the mother who had borne him in the morning, must feel that if Greeks or Norsemen who told of such things are to be condemned, they must be condemned on other grounds, and not because in Achilleus, or Sigurdr, or Odysseus, they have given us pictures of obstinate inaction or brutal revenge. Possibly, to some among those old poets, the real nature of the tales which they were telling was not so completely hidden as we may deem. It is hard to think that the writer of the Hymn to Hermes knew nothing of the key which was to unlock all its secrets. The very form of their language would warrant us in saying much more. But the words of Kumârila prove that among the Eastern Aryans the real character of their mythology had not been forgotten. He too had to listen to complaints like those which

Pindar brings against the follies or the vices of the gods. His answer is ready.

'It is fabled that Prajāpati, the Lord of Creation, did violence to his daughter. But what does it mean? Prajāpati, the Lord of Creation, is a name of the sun; and he is called so because he protects all creatures [Alexandros]. His daughter Ushas is the dawn. And when it is said that he was in love with her, this only means that, at sunrise, the sun runs after the dawn, the dawn being at the same time called the daughter of the sun, because she rises when he approaches. In the same manner, if it is said that Indra was the seducer of Ahalyā, this does not imply that the god Indra committed such a crime: but Indra means the sun, and Ahalyā the night; and, as the night is seduced and ruined by the sun of the morning, therefore is Indra called the paramour of Ahalyā.'<sup>1</sup>

It is the legend of Œdipus and Iocastē, one of the most awful, and, in some aspects, the most repulsive, in the wide range of Greek mythology.<sup>2</sup> If the real nature of this tale is laid

The  
morality  
of Hesiod.

<sup>1</sup> Max Müller, History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 530.

<sup>2</sup> Nothing can exceed the coarseness of the legend of Erichthonios as given by Apollodorus, iii. 14, 6. It is, however, nothing more than a strange jumble of images which are found scattered through a hundred legends, and which may be translated into the following phrases:—

bare before us, we may at once assure ourselves that these stories are not the fruit of depraved imaginations and brutal lives. There is no longer any mystery in the strange combination of repulsive legends with a sensitive morality in the Hesiodic poem of the Works and Days. We cease to wonder that the same poet who has recounted the tale of Pandora should tell us that the eye of God is in every place watching the evil and the good,<sup>1</sup> that the duty of man is to avoid the smooth road to evil,<sup>2</sup> and to choose the strait path of good, which, rough at the first, becomes easy to those who walk in it.<sup>3</sup>

The Dawn stands before the Sun, and asks him for his armour.

The face of the Dawn charms the Sun, who seeks to embrace her.

The Dawn flies from the Sun, and a soft shower falls on the earth, as his piercing rays shoot across the sky after her departing form.

From the soft shower springs the Summer with its fruits.

The Dawn would make the Summer immortal, and intrusts the Summer to the care of the Dew.

The serpents of night lie coiled round the Summer in the morning.

The sisters of the Dew are slain by the Dawn.

<sup>1</sup> Works and Days, 252, 253, 265.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 286.

<sup>3</sup> μακρὸς δὲ καὶ ὅρθιος οἶμος ἐπ' αὐτὴν  
καὶ τρηχὺς τὸ πρῶτον· ἐπήν δὲ εἰς ἀκρον Ικηα,  
βηδίη δῆ ἔπειτα πέλει, χαλεπή περ ἁῦσα. Ib. 290.

## TALES.



## MEDUSA.

**I**N the far western land, where the Hesperides guard the golden apples which Gaia gave to the lady Hérê, dwelt the maiden Medusa, with her sisters Stheino and Eurualê, in their lonely and dismal home. Between them and the land of living men flowed the gentle stream of ocean,<sup>1</sup> so that only the name of the Gorgon sisters was known to the sons of men, and the heart of Medusa yearned in vain to see some face which might look on her with love and pity. For on her lay the doom of death, but her sisters could neither grow old nor die. For them there was nothing fearful in the stillness of their gloomy home, as they sat with stern unpitying faces, gazing on the silent land beyond the ocean stream. But Medusa wandered to and fro, longing to see something new in a home to which no change ever came; and her heart pined for lack of those things which gladden the souls of mortal men. For where she dwelt there was neither day nor night. She never saw the bright children of

Helios driving his flocks to their pastures in the morning. She never beheld the stars as they look out from the sky, when the sun sinks down into his golden cup<sup>2</sup> in the evening. There no clouds ever passed across the heaven, no breeze ever whispered in the air; but a pale yellow light brooded on the land everlastingily. So there rested on the face of Medusa a sadness such as the children of men may never feel; and the look of hopeless pain was the more terrible because of the greatness of her beauty. She spake not to any of her awful grief, for her sisters knew not of any such thing as gentleness and love, and there was no comfort for her from the fearful Graiae who were her kinsfolk. Sometimes she sought them out in their dark caves, for it was something to see even the faint glimmer of the light of day which reached the dwelling of the Graiae; but they spake not to her a word of hope when she told them of her misery, and she wandered back to the land which the light of Helios might never enter. Her brow was knit with pain, but no tear wetted her cheek, for her grief was too great for weeping.

But harder things yet were in store for Medusa; for Athénê, the daughter of Zeus, came from the Libyan land to the dwelling of the Gorgon sisters, and she charged Medusa to go with her to the

gardens where the children of Hesperos guard the golden apples of the lady Hêrê. Then Medusa bowed herself down at the feet of Athênê, and besought her to have pity on her changeless sorrow, and she said, ‘Child of Zeus, thou dwellest with thy happy kinsfolk, where Helios gladdens all with his light and the Horæ lead the glad dance when Phœbus touches the strings of his golden harp. Here there is neither night nor day, nor cloud or breeze or storm. Let me go forth from this horrible land and look on the face of mortal men ; for I too must die, and my heart yearns for the love which my sisters scorn.’ Then Athênê looked on her sternly, and said, ‘What hast thou to do with love ? and what is the love of men for one who is of kin to the beings who may not die ? Tarry here till thy doom is accomplished ; and then it may be that Zeus will grant thee a place among those who dwell in his glorious home.’ But Medusa said, ‘Lady, let me go forth now. I cannot tell how many ages may pass before I die, and thou knowest not the yearning which fills the heart of mortal things for tenderness and love.’ Then a look of anger came over the fair face of Athênê, and she said, ‘Trouble me not. Thy prayer is vain ; and the sons of men would shrink from thee, if thou

couldst go among them, for hardly could they look on the woful sorrow of thy countenance and live.' But Medusa answered gently, 'Lady, hope has a wondrous power to kill the deepest grief, and in the pure light of Helios my face may be as fair as thine.'

Then the anger of Athénê became fiercer still, and she said, 'Dost thou dare to vie with me ?<sup>3</sup> I stand by the side of Zeus, to do his will, and the splendour of his glory rests upon me; and what art thou, that thou shouldst speak to me such words as these ? Therefore, hear thy doom. Henceforth, if mortal man ever look upon thee, one glance of thy face shall turn him to stone. Thy beauty shall still remain, but it shall be to thee the blackness of death. The hair which streams in golden tresses over thy fair shoulders shall be changed into hissing snakes, which shall curl and cluster round thy neck. On thy countenance shall be seen only fear and dread, that so all mortal things which look on thee may die.' So Athénê departed from her, and the blackness of great horror rested on the face of Medusa, and the hiss of the snakes was heard as they twined around her head and their coils were wreathed about her neck. Yet the will of Athénê was not

wholly accomplished; for the heart of Medusa was not changed by the doom which gave to her face its deadly power, and she said, ‘ Daughter of Zeus, there is hope yet, for thou hast left me mortal still, and, one day, I shall die.’

## DANAË.

FROM the home of Phœbus Apollo at Delphi came words of warning to Acrisios, the king of Argos, when he sent to ask what should befall him in the after-days; and the warning was that he should be slain by the son of his daughter Danaë. So the love of Acrisios was changed towards his child, who was growing up, fair as the flowers of spring, in her father's house; and he shut her up in a dungeon, caring nothing for her wretchedness. But the power of Zeus was greater than the power of Acrisios, and Danaë became the mother of Perseus; and they called her child the son of the Bright Morning,<sup>4</sup> because Zeus had scattered the darkness of her prison-house. Then Acrisios feared exceedingly, and he spake the word that Danaë and her child should die.

The first streak of day was spreading its faint light in the eastern sky when they led Danaë to the sea-shore, and put her in a chest, with a loaf of bread and a flask of water. Her child slept in her arms, and the rocking of the waves, as they

bore the chest over the heaving sea, made him slumber yet more sweetly; and the tears of Danaë fell on him as she thought of the days that were past and the death which she must die in the dark waters. And she prayed to Zeus, and said, ‘O Zeus, who hast given me my child, canst thou hear me still and save me from this horrible doom?’<sup>5</sup> Then a deep sleep came over Danaë, and, as she slept with the babe in her arms, the winds carried the chest at the bidding of Poseidôn and cast it forth on the shore of the island of Seriphos.

Now it so chanced that Dictys, the brother of Polydectes, the king of the island, was casting a net into the sea, when he saw something thrown up by the waves on the dry land; and he went hastily and took Danaë with her child out of the chest, and said, ‘Fear not, lady; no harm shall happen to thee here, and they who have dealt hardly with thee shall not come nigh to hurt thee in this land.’ So he led her to the house of king Polydectes, who welcomed her to his home, and Danaë had rest after all her troubles.

Thus the time went on, and the child Perseus grew up brave and strong, and all who saw him marvelled at his beauty. The light of early morning is not more pure than was the colour on

his fair cheeks, and the golden locks streamed brightly over his shoulders, like the rays of the sun when they rest on the hills at midday. And Danaë said, ‘My child, in the land where thou wast born, they called thee the son of the Bright Morning. Keep thy faith, and deal justly with all men: so shalt thou deserve the name which they gave thee.’ Thus Perseus grew up, hating all things that were wrong and mean; and all who looked on him knew that his hands were clean and his heart pure.

But there were evil days in store for Danaë—for king Polydectes sought to win her love against her will.<sup>6</sup> Long time he besought her to hearken to his prayer; but her heart was far away in the land of Argos, where her child was born, and she said, ‘O king, my life is sad and weary; what is there in me that thou shouldest seek my love? There are maidens in thy land fairer far than I; leave me then to take care of my child while we dwell in a strange land.’ Then Polydectes said hastily, ‘Think not, lady, to escape me thus. If thou wilt not hearken to my words, thy child shall not remain with thee; but I will send him forth far away into the western land, that he may bring me the head of the Gorgon Medusa.’

So Danaë sat weeping when Polydectes had left her, and when Perseus came he asked her why she mourned and wept; and he said, ‘Tell me, my mother, if the people of this land have done thee wrong, and I will take a sword in my hand and smite them.’ Then Danaë answered, ‘Many toils await thee in time to come, but here thou canst do nothing. Only be of good courage, and deal truly, and one day thou shalt be able to save me from my enemies.’

Still, as the months went on, Polydectes sought to gain the love of Danaë, until at last he began to hate her because she would not listen to his prayer. And he spake the word, that Perseus must go forth to slay Medusa, and that Danaë must be shut up in a dungeon until the boy should return from the land of the Graiae and the Gorgons.

So once more Danaë lay within a prison; and the boy Perseus came to bid her farewell before he set out on his weary journey. Then Danaë folded her arms around him, and looked sadly into his eyes, and said, ‘My child, whatever a mortal man can do for his mother, that, I know, thou wilt do for me; but I cannot tell whether thy long toils shall lead thee, save that the land of the Gorgons lies beyond the slow-rolling stream

of ocean. Nor can I tell how thou canst do the bidding of Polydectes, for Medusa alone of the Gorgon sisters may grow old and die, and the deadly snakes will slay those who come near, and one glance of her woful eye can turn all mortal things to stone. Once, they say, she was fair to look upon; but the lady Athéné has laid on her a dark doom, so that all who see the Gorgon's face must die. It may be, Perseus, that the heart of Medusa is full rather of grief than hatred, and that not of her own will the woful glare of her eye changes all mortal things into stone; and, if so it be, then the deed which thou art charged to do shall set her free from a hateful life, and bring to her some of those good things for which now she yearns in vain.<sup>7</sup> Go then, my child, and prosper. Thou hast a great warfare before thee; and though I know not how thou canst win the victory, yet I know that true and fair dealing gives a wondrous might to the children of men, and Zeus will strengthen the arm of those who hate treachery and lies.'

Then Perseus bade his mother take courage, and vowed a vow that he would not trust in craft and falsehood; and he said, 'I know not, my mother, the dangers and the foes which await me, but be sure that I will not meet them with any

weapons which thou wouldest scorn. Only, as the days and months roll on, think not that evil has befallen me; for there is a hope within me that I shall be able to do the bidding of Polydectes and to bear thee hence to our Argive land.' So Perseus went forth with a good courage to seek out the Gorgon Medusa.

## PERSEUS.

THE east wind crested with a silvery foam the waves of the sea of Hellê,<sup>8</sup> when Perseus went into the ship which was to bear him away from Seriphos. The white sail was spread to the breeze, and the ship sped gaily over the heaving waters. Soon the blue hills rose before them, and as the sun sank down in the west, Perseus trod once more the Argive land.

But there was no rest for him now in his ancient home. On and on, through Argos and other lands, he must wander in search of the Gorgon, with nothing but his strong heart and his stout arm to help him. Yet for himself he feared not, and if his eyes filled with tears, it was only because he thought of his mother Danaê; and he said within himself, ‘O my mother, I would that thou wert here. I see the towers of the fair city where Acrisios still is king; I see the home which thou longest to behold, and which now I may not enter; but one day I shall bring thee hither in triumph, when I come to win back my birthright.’

Brightly before his mind rose the vision of the time to come, as he lay down to rest beneath the blue sky; but when his eyes were closed in sleep, there stood before him a vision yet more glorious, for the lady Athénê was come from the home of Zeus, to aid the young hero as he set forth on his weary labour. Her face gleamed with a beauty such as is not given to the daughters of men. But Perseus feared not because of her majesty, for the soft spell of sleep lay on him; but he heard her words as she said, ‘ I am come down from Olympus where dwells thy father Zeus, to help thee in thy mighty toil. Thou art brave of heart and strong of hand, but thou knowest not which way thou shouldest go, and thou hast no weapons with which to slay the Gorgon Medusa. Many things thou needest, but only against the freezing stare of the Gorgon’s face can I guard thee now. On her countenance thou canst not look and live; and even when she is dead, one glance of that fearful face will still turn all mortal things to stone. So, when thou drawest nigh to slay her, thine eye must not rest upon her. Take good heed, then, to thyself, for while they are awake the Gorgon sisters dread no danger, for the snakes which curl around their heads warn them of every peril. Only while they sleep canst thou approach them; and the face

of Medusa, in life or in death, thou must never see. Take then this mirror, into which thou canst look, and when thou beholdest her image there, then nerve thy heart and take thine aim, and carry away with thee the head of the mortal maiden. Linger not in thy flight, for her sisters will pursue after thee, and they can neither grow old nor die.'

So Athénê departed from him; and early in the morning he saw by his side the mirror which she had given to him; and he said, 'Now I know that my toil is not in vain, and the help of Athénê is a pledge of yet more aid in time to come.' So he journeyed on with a good heart over hill and dale, across rivers and forests, towards the setting of the sun. Manfully he toiled on, till sleep weighed heavy on his eyes, and he lay down to rest on a broad stone in the evening. Once more before him stood a glorious form. A burnished helmet glistened on his head, a golden staff was in his hand, and on his feet were the golden sandals which bore him through the air with a flight more swift than the eagle's. And Perseus heard a voice which said, 'I am Hermes, the messenger of Zeus, and I am come to arm thee against thine enemies. Take this sword, which slays all mortal things on which it may fall,<sup>9</sup> and go on thy way with a cheerful heart. A weary road yet lies before thee, and for

many a long day must thou wander on before thou canst have other help in thy mighty toil. Far away, towards the setting of the sun, lies the Tartessian land, whence thou shalt see the white-crested mountains where Atlas holds up the pillars of the heaven. There must thou cross the dark waters, and then thou wilt find thyself in the land of the Graiae, who are of kin to the Gorgon sisters, and thou wilt see no more the glory of Helios, who gladdens the homes of living men. Only a faint light from the far-off sun comes dimly to the desolate land where, hidden in a gloomy cave, lurk the hapless Graiae.<sup>10</sup> These thou must seek out; and when thou hast found them, fear them not. Over their worn and wrinkled faces stream tangled masses of long grey hair; their voice comes hollow from their toothless gums, and a single eye is passed from one to the other when they wish to look forth from their dismal dwelling. Seek them out, for these alone can tell thee what more remaineth yet for thee to do.'

When Perseus woke in the morning, the sword of Hermes lay beside him; and he rose up with great joy, and said, 'The help of Zeus fails me not; if more is needed, will he not grant it to me?' So onward he went to the Tartessian land, and thence across the dark sea towards the country of the

Graiae, till he saw the pillars of Atlas rise afar off into the sky. Then, as he drew nigh to the hills which lie beneath them, he came to a dark cave, and as he stooped to look into it, he fancied that he saw the grey hair which streamed over the shoulders of the Graiae. Long time he rested on the rocks without the cave, till he knew by their heavy breathing that the sisters were asleep. Then he crept in stealthily, and took the eye which lay beside them, and waited till they should wake. At last, as the faint light from the far-off sun <sup>11</sup> who shines on mortal men reached the cave, he saw them groping for the eye which he had taken ; and presently from their toothless jaws came a hollow voice, which said, ‘ There is some one near us who is sprung from the children of men ; for of old time we have known that one should come and leave us blind until we did his bidding.’ Then Perseus came forth boldly and stood before them and said, ‘ Daughters of Phorkos and of Kêtô, I know that ye are of kin to the Gorgon sisters, and to these ye must now guide me. Think not to escape by craft or guile, for in my hand is the sword of Hermes, and it slays all living things on which it may fall.’ And they answered quickly, ‘ Slay us not, child of man, for we will deal truly by thee, and tell thee of the things which must be

done before thou canst reach the dwelling of the Gorgon sisters. Go hence, along the plain which stretches before thee, then over hill and vale, and forest and desert, till thou comest to the slow-rolling ocean stream ; there call on the nymphs who dwell beneath the waters, and they shall rise at thy bidding and tell thee of many things which it is not given to us to know.'

Onwards again he went, across the plain, and over hill and vale, till he came to the ocean which flows lazily round the world of living men. No ray of the pure sunshine pierced the murky air, but the pale yellow light, which broods on the land of the Gorgons, showed to him the dark stream, as he stood on the banks and summoned the nymphs to do his bidding. Presently they stood before him, and greeted him by his name ; and they said, 'O Perseus, thou art the first of living men whose feet have trodden this desolate shore. Long time have we known that the will of Zeus would bring thee hither to accomplish the doom of the mortal Medusa. We know the things of which thou art in need, and without us thy toil would in very truth be vain. Thou hast to come near to beings who can see all around them, for the snakes which twist about their heads are their eyes ; and here is the helmet of Hades, which will enable thee to draw

nigh to them unseen. Thou hast the sword which never falls in vain ; but without this bag which we give thee, thou canst not bear away the head the sight of which changes all mortal things to stone. And when thy work of death is done on the mortal maiden, thou must fly from her sisters who cannot die, and who will follow thee more swiftly than eagles ; and here are the sandals which shall waft thee through the air more quickly than a dream. Hasten then, child of Danaë, for we are ready to bear thee in our hands across the ocean stream.'

So they bare Perseus to the Gorgon land, and he journeyed on in the pale yellow light which rests upon it everlastingly.

On that night, in the darkness of their lonesome dwelling, Medusa spake to her sisters of the doom which should one day be accomplished ; and she said, 'Sisters, ye care little for the grief whose image on my face turns all mortal things to stone. Ye who know not old age or death, know not the awful weight of my agony, and cannot feel the signs of the change that is coming. But I know them. The snakes which twine around my head warn me not in vain ; but they warn me against perils which I care not now to shun. The wrath of Athénê, who crushed the faint hopes which lingered in my heart, left me mortal still, and I

am weary with the woe of the ages that are past. O sisters, ye know not what it is to pity, but something more ye know what it is to love, for even in this living tomb we have dwelt together in peace, and peace is of kin to love. But hearken to me now. Mine eyes are heavy with sleep, and my heart tells me that the doom is coming, for I am but a mortal maiden ; and I care not if the slumber which is stealing on me be the sleep of those whose life is done. Sisters, my lot is happier at the least than yours ; for he who slays me is my friend. I am weary of my woe, and it may be that better things await me when I am dead.'

But, even as Medusa spake, the faces of Stheino and Eurualê remained unchanged ; and it seemed as though for them the words of Medusa were but an empty sound. Presently the Gorgon sisters were all asleep. The deadly snakes lay still and quiet, and only the breath which hissed from their mouths was heard throughout the cave.

Then Perseus drew nigh, with the helmet of Hades<sup>12</sup> on his head, and the sandals of the nymphs on his feet. In his right hand was the sword of Hermes, and in his left the mirror of Athénê. Long time he gazed on the image of Medusa's face, which still showed the wreck of her ancient beauty ; and he said within himself,

'Mortal maiden, well may it be that more than mortal woe should give to thy countenance its deadly power. The hour of thy doom is come; but death to thee must be a boon.' Then the sword of Hermes fell, and the great agony of Medusa was ended. So Perseus cast a veil over the dead face, and bare it away from the cave in the bag which the nymphs gave him on the banks of the slow-rolling ocean.

ANDROMEDA.<sup>13</sup>

TERRIBLE was the rage of the Gorgon sisters when they woke up from their sleep and saw that the doom of Medusa had been accomplished. The snakes hissed as they rose in knotted clusters round their heads, and the Gorgons gnashed their teeth in fury, not for any love of the mortal maiden whose woes were ended, but because a child of weak and toiling men had dared to approach the daughters of Phorkos and Kêtô. Swifter than the eagles they sped from their gloomy cave; but they sought in vain to find Perseus, for the helmet of Hades was on his head, and the sandals of the nymphs were bearing him through the air like a dream. Onwards he went, not knowing whither he was borne, for he saw but dimly through the pale yellow light which brooded on the Gorgon land everlasting; but presently he heard a groan as from one in mortal pain, and before him he beheld a giant form, on whose head rested the pillars of the heaven; and he heard a voice, which said, ‘Hast thou slain the

Gorgon Medusa, child of man, and art thou come to rid me of my long woe? Look on me, for I am Atlas, who rose up with the Titans against the power of Zeus, when Prometheus fought on his side; and of old time have I known that for me is no hope of rest till a mortal man should bring hither the Gorgon head which can turn all living things to stone. For so was it shown to me from Zeus, when he made me bow down beneath the weight of the brazen heaven. Yet, if thou hast slain Medusa, Zeus hath been more merciful to me than to Prometheus who was his friend, for he lies nailed on the rugged crags of Caucasus, and only thy child in the third generation shall scare away the vulture which gnaws his heart, and set the Titan free. But hasten now, Perseus, and let me look upon the Gorgon's face, for the agony of my labour is wellnigh greater than I can bear.'<sup>14</sup> So Perseus hearkened to the words of Atlas, and he unveiled before him the dead face of Medusa. Eagerly he gazed for a moment on the changeless countenance, as though beneath the blackness of great horror he yet saw the wreck of her ancient beauty and pitied her for her hopeless woe. But in an instant the straining eyes were closed, the heaving breast was still, the limbs which trembled with the weight of heaven

were stiff and cold ; and it seemed to Perseus, as he rose again into the pale yellow air, that the grey hairs which streamed from the giant's head were like the snow which rests on the peaks of a great mountain, and that in place of the trembling limbs he saw only the rents and clefts on a rough hillside.

Onward yet and higher he sped, he knew not whither, on the golden sandals, till from the murky glare of the Gorgon land he passed into a soft and tender light in which all things wore the colours of a dream.<sup>15</sup> It was not the light of sun or moon ; for in that land was neither day nor night. No breeze wafted the light clouds of morning through the sky, or stirred the leaves of the forest trees where the golden fruits glistened the whole year round ; but from beneath rose the echoes of sweet music, as he glided gently down to the earth. Then he took the helmet of Hades from off his head, and asked the people whom he met the name of this happy land ; and they said, ‘ We dwell where the icy breath of Boreas cannot chill the air or wither our fruits ; therefore is our land called the garden of the Hyperboreans.’ There for a while Perseus rested from his toil ; and all day long he saw the dances of happy maidens fair as Hêbê and Harmonia, and he

shared the rich banquets at which the people of the land feasted with wreaths of laurel twined around their head. There he rested in a deep peace, for no sound of strife or war can ever break it; and they know nothing of malice and hatred, of sickness, or old age.

But presently Perseus remembered his mother Danaë lying in her prison-house at Seriphos, and he left the garden of the Hyperboreans to return to the world of toiling men; but the people of the land knew only that it lay beyond the slow-rolling ocean stream, and Perseus saw not whither he went as he rose on his golden sandals into the soft and dreamy air. Onwards he went, until far beneath he beheld the ocean river, and once more he saw the light of Helios as he drove his fiery chariot through the heaven. Far away stretched the mighty Libyan plain, and further yet beyond the hills which shut it in he saw the waters of the dark sea, and the white line of foam where the breakers were dashed upon the shore. As he came nearer, he saw the huge rocks which rose out of the heaving waters, and on one of them he beheld a maiden whose limbs were fastened to the stone with chains. The folds of her white robe fluttered in the breeze, and her fair face was worn and wasted with the heat by day

and the cold by night. Then Perseus hastened to her and stood a long time before her, but she saw him not, for the helmet of Hades was on his head, and he watched her there till the tears started to his eyes for pity. Her hands were clasped upon her breast, and only the moving of her lips showed the greatness of her misery. Higher and higher rose the foaming waters, till at last the maiden said, ‘O Zeus, is there none whom thou canst send to help me?’ Then Perseus took the helmet in his hand, and stood before her in all his glorious beauty; and the maiden knew that she had nothing to fear when he said, ‘Lady, I see that thou art in great sorrow: tell me who it is that has wronged thee, and I will avenge thee mightily.’ And she answered, ‘Stranger, whoever thou art, I will trust thee, for thy face tells me that thou art not one of those who deal falsely. My name is Andromeda, and my father, Kepheus, is king of the rich Libyan land; but there is strife between him and the old man Nereus<sup>16</sup> who dwells with his daughters in the coral caves beneath the sea; for, as I grew up in my father’s house, my mother made a vain boast of my beauty, and said that among all the children of Nereus there was none so fair as I. So Nereus rose from his coral caves,

and went to the king Poseidon, and said, “ King of the broad sea, Cassiopeia hath done a grievous wrong to me and to my children. I pray thee let not her people escape for her evil words.” Then Poseidon let loose the waters of the sea, and they rushed in over the Libyan plains till only the hills which shut it in remained above them, and a mighty monster came forth and devoured all the fruits of the land. In grief and terror the people fell down before my father, Kepheus, and he sent to the home of Ammon<sup>17</sup> to ask what he should do for the plague of waters and for the savage beast who vexed them; and soon the answer came that he must chain up his daughter on a rock, till the beast came and took her for his prey. So they fastened me here to this desolate crag, and each day the monster comes nearer as the waters rise ; and soon, I think, they will place me within his reach.’ Then Perseus cheered her with kindly words, and said, ‘ Maiden, I am Perseus, to whom Zeus has given the power to do great things. I hold in my hand the sword of Hermes, which has slain the Gorgon Medusa, and I am bearing to Polydectes, who rules in Seriphos, the head which turns all who look on it into stone. Fear not, then, Andromeda. I will do battle with the monster, and, when thy foes are vanquished, I will sue for

the boon of thy love.' A soft blush as of great gladness came over the pale cheek of Andromeda as she answered, 'O Perseus, why should I hide from thee my joy? Thou hast come to me like the light of morning when it breaks on a woful night.' But, even as she spake, the rage of the waves waxed greater, and the waters rose higher and higher, lashing the rocks in their fury, and the hollow roar of the monster was heard as he hastened to seize his prey. Presently by the maiden's side he saw a glorious form with the flashing sword in his hand, and he lashed the waters in fiercer anger. Then Perseus went forth to meet him, and he held aloft the sword which Hermes gave to him, and said, 'Sword of Phœbus, let thy stroke be sure, for thou smitest the enemy of the helpless.' So the sword fell, and the blood of the mighty beast reddened the waters of the green sea.

In gladness of heart Perseus led the maiden to the halls of Kepheus, and he said, 'O king, I have slain the monster to whom thou didst give thy child for a prey: let her go with me now to other lands, if she gainsay me not.' But Kepheus answered, 'Tarry with us yet awhile, and the marriage feast shall be made ready, if indeed thou must hasten away from the Libyan land.'

So, at the banquet, by the side of Perseus sate the beautiful Andromeda; but there arose a fierce strife, for Phineus had come to the feast, and it angered him that another should have for his wife the maiden whom he had sought to make his bride. Deeper and fiercer grew his rage, as he looked on the face of Perseus, till at last he spake evil words of the stranger who had taken away the prize which should have been his own. But Perseus said calmly, ‘Why, then, didst thou not slay the monster thyself and set the maiden free?’ When Phineus heard these words, his rage almost choked him, and he charged his people to draw their swords and slay Perseus. Wildly rose the din in the banquet-hall, but Perseus unveiled the Gorgon’s face, and Phineus and all his people were frozen into stone.

Then, in the still silence, Perseus bare away Andromeda from her father’s home; and when they had wandered through many lands, they came at length to Seriphos. Once more Danaë looked on the face of her son, and said, ‘My child, the months have rolled wearily since I bade thee farewell; but sure I am that my prayer has been heard, for thy face is as the face of one who comes back a conqueror from battle.’ Then Perseus said, ‘Yes, my mother, the help of Zeus

has never failed me. When the eastern breeze carried me hence to the Argive land, my heart was full of sorrow, because I saw the city which thou didst yearn to see, and the home which thou couldst not enter; and I vowed a vow to bring thee back in triumph when I came to claim my birthright. That evening, as I slept, the lady Athénê came to me from the home of Zeus, and gave me a mirror so that I might take the Gorgon's head without looking on the face which turns everything into stone; and yet another night, Hermes stood before me, and gave me the sword whose stroke never fails, and the Graiae told me where I should find the nymphs who gave me the helmet of Hades, and the bag which has borne hither the Gorgon's head, and the golden sandals which carried me like a dream over land and sea. O my mother, I have done wondrous things by the aid of Zeus. By me the doom of Medusa has been accomplished; and I think that the words which thou didst speak were true, for the image of the Gorgon's face, which I saw in Athénê's mirror, was as the countenance of one whose beauty has been marred by a woful agony; and whenever I have looked since on that image, it has seemed to me as though it wore the look of one who rested in death from a mighty pain.

So, as the giant Atlas looked on that grief-stricken brow, he felt no more the weight of the heaven as it rested on him; and the grey hair which streamed from his head seemed to me, when I left him, like the snow which clothes the mountain-tops in winter. So, when from the happy gardens of the Hyperboreans I came to the rich Libyan plain and had killed the monster who sought to slay Andromeda, the Gorgon's face turned Phineus and his people into stone, when they sought to slay me because I had won her love.' Then Danaë answered the questions of Perseus, and told him how Polydectes had vexed her with his evil words, and how Dictys<sup>18</sup> alone had shielded her from his brother. And Perseus bade Danaë be of good cheer, because the recompence of Polydectes was nigh at hand.

There was joy and feasting in Seriphos when the news was spread abroad that Perseus had brought back for the king the head of the Gorgon Medusa; and Polydectes made a great feast, and the wine sparkled in the goblets as the minstrels sang of the great deeds of the son of Danaë. Then Perseus told them of all that Hermes and Athénê had done for him. He showed them the helmet of Hades, and the golden sandals, and the unerring sword, and then he unveiled the face of

Medusa before Polydectes and the men who had aided him against his mother Danaë. So Perseus looked upon them, as they sate at the rich banquet, stiff and cold as stone, and he felt that his mighty work was ended. Then, at his prayer, came Hermes, the messenger of Zeus, and Perseus gave him back the helmet of Hades, and the sword which had slain the Gorgon, and the sandals which had borne him through the air like a dream. And Hermes gave the helmet again to Hades, and the sandals to the ocean nymphs; but Athénê took the Gorgon's head, and it was placed upon her shield.

Then Perseus spake to Danaë, and said, 'My mother, it is time for thee to go home. The Gorgon's face has turned Polydectes and his people into stone, and Dictys rules in Seriphos.' So once more the white sails were filled with the eastern breeze, and Danaë saw once more the Argive land. From city to city spread the tidings that Perseus was come, who had slain the Gorgon, and the youths and maidens sang 'Io Pæan' as they led the conqueror to the halls of Acrisios.

## ACRISIOS.

THE shouts of ‘Io Pæan’ reached the ear of Acrisios, as he sat in his lonely hall, marvelling at the strange things which must have happened to waken the sounds of joy and triumph; for, since the day when Danaë was cast forth with her babe on the raging waters, the glory of war had departed from Argos, and it seemed as though all the chieftains had lost their ancient strength and courage. But the wonder of Acrisios was changed to a great fear when they told him that his child Danaë was coming home, and that the hero Perseus had rescued her from Polydectes, the king of Seriphos. The memory of all the wrong which he had done to his daughter tormented him, and still in his mind dwelt the words of warning which came from Phœbus Apollo that he should one day be slain by the hands of her son; so that, as he looked forth on the sky, it seemed to him as though he should see the sun again no more.

In haste and terror Acrisios fled from his home.

He tarried not to hear the voice of Danaë; he stayed not to look on the face of Perseus, and to see that the hero who had slain the Gorgon bare him no malice for the wrongs of the former days. Quickly he sped over hill and dale, across river and forest, till he came to the house of Teutamidas, the great chieftain who ruled in Larissa.

The feast was spread in the banquet-hall, and the Thessalian minstrels sang of the brave deeds of Perseus, for even thither had his fame reached already. They told how from the land of toiling men he had passed to the country of the Graiae and the Gorgons, how he had slain the mortal Medusa and stiffened the giant Atlas into stone; and then they sang how with the sword of Hermes he smote the mighty beast which ravaged the Libyan land, and won Andromeda to be his bride. Then Teutamidas spake and said, ‘My friend, I envy thee for thy happy lot, for not often in the world of men may fathers reap such glory from their children as thou hast won from Perseus. In the ages to come, men shall love to tell of his great and good deeds, and from him shall spring mighty chieftains, who shall be stirred up to a purer courage when they remember how Perseus toiled and triumphed before them. And now tell me, friend, wherefore thou hast come hither?’

Thy cheek is pale, and thy hand trembles; and I think not that it can be from the weight of years, for thy old age is yet but green, and thou mayest hope still to see the children of Perseus clustering around thy knees.'

But Acrisios could scarcely answer for shame and fear; for he cared not to tell Teutamidas of the wrongs which he had done to Danaë. So he said hastily that he had fled from a great danger, for the warning of Phœbus was that he should be slain by his daughter's son. And Teutamidas said, 'Has thy daughter yet another son?' And then Acrisios was forced to own that he had fled from the hero Perseus. But the face of Teutamidas flushed with anger as he said, 'O shame, that thou shouldest flee from him who ought to be thy glory and thy pride! Everywhere men speak of the goodness and the truth of Perseus, and I will not believe that he bears thee a grudge for anything that thou hast done to him. Nay, thou doest to him a more grievous wrong in shunning him now than when thou didst cast him forth in his mother's arms upon the angry sea.' So he pleaded with Acrisios for Perseus, until he spake the word that Danaë and her child might come to the great games which were to be held on the plain before Larissa.<sup>19</sup>

With shouts of ‘*Io Pæan*’ the youths and maidens went out before Perseus as he passed from the city of Acrisios to go to Larissa, and everywhere as he journeyed, from town and village the people came forth to greet the bright hero and the beautiful Andromeda, whom he had saved from the Libyan dragon. Onwards they went, spreading gladness everywhere, till the cold heart of Acrisios himself was touched with a feeling of strange joy, as he saw the band of youths and maidens who came before them to the house of Teutamidas. So once more his child Danaë stood before him, beautiful still, although the sorrows of twenty years had dimmed the brightness of her eye, and the merry laugh of her youth was gone. Once more he looked on the face of Perseus, and he listened to the kindly greeting of the hero whom he had wronged in the days of his helpless childhood. But he marvelled yet more at the beauty of Andromeda, and he thought within himself that throughout the wide earth were none so fair as Perseus and the wife whom he had won with the sword of Hermes.

Then, as they looked on the chiefs who strove together in the games, the shouting of the crowd told at the end of each that Perseus was the conqueror. At last they stood forth to see which

should have most strength of arm in hurling the quoit; and, when Perseus aimed at the mark, the quoit swerved aside and smote Acrisios on the head; and the warning of Phœbus Apollo was accomplished.

Great was the sorrow of Teutamidas and his people as the chieftain of Argos lay dead before them; but deeper still and more bitter was the grief of Perseus for the deed which he had unwittingly done; and he said, ‘O Zeus, I have striven to keep my hands clean and to deal truly, and a hard recompense hast thou given me.’

So they went back mourning to Argos; but although he strove heartily to rule his people well, the grief of Perseus could not be lessened while he dwelt in the house of Acrisios. So he sent a messenger to his kinsman Megapenthes<sup>20</sup> who ruled at Tiryns, and said, ‘Come thou and rule in Argos, and I will come and dwell among thy people.’ So Perseus dwelt at Tiryns, and the men of the city rejoiced that he had come to rule over them. Thus the months and years went quickly by, as Perseus strove with all his might to make his people happy and to guard them against their enemies. At his bidding, the Cyclopes came from the far-off Lykian land, and built the mighty walls which gird the city round

about; and they helped him to build yet another city, which grew in after-times to be even greater and mightier than Tiryns. So rose the walls of Mykēnæ,<sup>21</sup> and there too the people loved and honoured Perseus more for his just dealing than for all the deeds which he had done with the sword of Hermes. At last the time came when the hero must rest from his long toil; but as they looked on his face, bright and beautiful even in death, the minstrels said, ‘We shall hear his voice no more, but the name of Perseus shall never die.’

HERMES.<sup>22</sup>

EARLY in the morning, long ago, in a cave of the great Kyllenian hill, lay the new-born Hermes, the son of Zeus and Maia. The cradle-clothes were scarcely stirred by his soft breathing, while he slept as peacefully as the children of mortal mothers. But the sun had not driven his fiery chariot over half the heaven, when the babe arose from his sacred cradle and stepped forth from the dark cavern. Before the threshold a tortoise fed lazily on the grass; and when the child saw it, he laughed merrily. ‘Ah! this is luck indeed,’ he said; ‘whence hast thou come, pretty creature, with thy bright speckled shell? Thou art mine now, and I must take thee into my cave. It is better to be under shelter than out of doors; and though there may be some use in thee while thou livest, it will comfort thee to think that thou wilt sing sweetly when thou art dead.’

So the child Hermes took up his treasure in both arms, and carried it into the cavern. There he took an iron probe, and pierced out the life of

the tortoise; and quick as thought, he drilled holes in its shell, and fixed in them reed-canæs. Then across the shell he fastened a piece of ox-hide, and with seven sheep-gut cords he finished the making of his lyre. Presently he struck it with the bow, and a wave of sweet music swelled out upon the air. Like the merry songs of youths and maidens, as they sport in village feasts, rose the song of the child Hermes; and his eyes laughed slyly as he sang of the loves of Zeus and Maia, and how he himself was born of the mighty race of the gods. Still he sang on, telling of all that he saw around him in the glittering home of the nymph, his mother. But all the while, as he sang, his mind was pondering on other things; and when the song was ended, he went forth from the cave, like a thief in the night, on his wily errand.

The sun was hastening down the slope of heaven with his chariot and horses to the slow-rolling stream of ocean, as Hermes came to the shadowy hills of Pieria, where the cattle of the gods feed in their large pastures. There he took fifty from the herd, and made ready to drive them to the Kyllelian hill.<sup>23</sup> But before him lay vast plains of sand; and, therefore, lest the track of the cattle should tell the tale of his thieving, he drove the

beasts round about by crooked paths, until it seemed as though they had gone to the place from which he had stolen them.<sup>24</sup> He had taken good care that his own footsteps should not betray him, for with branches of tamarisk and myrtle, well twisted with their leaves, he hastily made himself sandals, and sped away from Pieria. One man alone saw him, a very old man, who was working in his vineyard on the sunny plain of Onchêstos. To him Hermes went quickly, and said, ‘Old man, thou wilt have plenty of wine when these roots come all into bearing trim. Meanwhile, keep a wise head on thy crumpled shoulders, and take heed not to remember more than may be convenient.’

Onwards, over dark hills, and through sounding dells, and across flowery plains, hastened the child Hermes, driving his flock before him. The night waxed and waned, and the moon had climbed to her watchtower in the heaven, when, in the flush of early morning, Hermes reached the banks of the great Alpheian stream. There he turned his herd to feed on the grassy plain, while he gathered logs of wood, and, rubbing two sticks together, kindled the first flame that burned upon the earth where dwell the sons of men.<sup>25</sup> The smoke went up to the heaven, and the flame crackled fiercely

beneath it, as Hermes brought forth two of the herd, and, tumbling them on their back, pierced out the life of both. Their hides he placed on the hard rock; their flesh he cut up into twelve portions; and so Hermes hath the right of ordering all sacrifices<sup>26</sup> which the children of men offer to the undying gods. But he ate not of the flesh or fat, although hunger sorely pressed him;<sup>27</sup> and he burnt the bones in the fire, and tossed his tamarisk sandals into the swift stream of Alpheios. Then he quenched the fire, and with all his might trampled down the ashes, until the pale moon rose up again in the sky. So he sped on his way to Kyllénê. Neither god nor man saw him as he went, nor did the dogs bark. Early in the morning he reached his mother's cave, and darted through the keyhole of the door, softly as a summer breeze. Without a sound, his little feet paced the stony floor, till he reached his cradle and lay down, playing like a babe among the clothes with his left hand, while his right held the tortoise-lyre hidden underneath them.

But, wily though he was, he could not cheat his mother. To his cradle she came and said, 'Whither hast thou wandered in the dark night? Crafty rogue, mischief will be thy ruin. The son of Leto will soon be here, and bear thee away

bound in chains not easily shaken off. Out of my sight, little wretch, born to worry the blessed gods and plague the race of men!' 'Mother,' said Hermes gently, 'why talk thus to me, as though I were like mortal babes, a poor cowering thing, to cry for a little scolding? I know thy interest and mine: why should we stay here in this wretched cave, with never a gift or a feast to cheer our hearts? I shall not stay. It is pleasanter to banquet with the gods than to dwell in a cavern in draughts of whistling wind. I shall try my luck against Apollo, for I mean to be his peer; and if he will not suffer me, and if Zeus my father takes not up my cause, I will see what I can do for myself, by going to the shrine of Pytho and stealing thence the tripods and cauldrons, the iron vessels and glittering robes. If I may not have honour in Olympus, I can at least be the prince of thieves.'

Meanwhile, as they talked together, Eôs rose up from the deep ocean stream, and her tender light flushed across the sky, while Apollo hastened to Onchestos and the holy grove of Poseidon. There the old man was at work in his vineyard, and to him Phœbus went quickly and said, 'Friend hedger, I am come from Pieria looking for my cows. Fifty of them have been driven away, and

the bull has been left behind with the four dogs who guarded them as faithfully as men. Tell me, old man, hast thou seen any one with these cows, on the road?' But the old man said that it would be a hard matter to tell of all that he might chance to see. 'Many travellers journey on this road, some with evil thoughts, some with good; I cannot well remember all. This only I know, that yesterday, from the rising up of the sun to its setting, I was digging in my vineyard; and I think, but I am not sure, that I saw a child with a herd of cattle. A babe he was, and he held a staff in his hand, and, as he went, he wandered strangely from the path on either side.'

Then Phœbus stayed not to hear more, for now he knew of a surety that the new-born son of Zeus had done him the mischief. Wrapped in a purple mist, he hastened to beautiful Pylos and came on the track of cattle. 'O Zeus,' he cried, 'this is indeed a marvel. I see the footprints of cattle, but they are marked as though the cattle were going to the asphodel meadow, not away from it. Of man or woman, of wolf, bear, or lion, I spy not a single trace. Only here and there I behold the footprint of some strange monster, who has left his mark at random on either side of the road.' So on he sped to the woody heights of Kyllénē,

and stood on the doorstep of Maia's cave. Straight-way the child Hermes nestled under the cradle-clothes in fear, like a new-born babe asleep. But, seeing through all his craft, Phœbus looked steadily through all the cave and opened three secret places full of the food and drink of the gods, and full also of gold and silver and raiment; but not a cow was in any of them. At last he fixed his eyes sternly on the child and said, 'Wily babe, where are my cows? If thou wilt not tell me, there will be strife between us; and then I shall hurl thee down to the gloomy Tartarus, to the land of darkness whence neither thy father nor thy mother can bring thee back, and where thy kingdom shall be only over the ghosts of men.' 'Ah!' said Hermes, 'these are dreadful words indeed; but why dost thou chide me thus, or come here to look for cows? I have not seen or heard of them, nor has any one told me of them. I cannot tell where they are, or get the reward, if any were promised, for discovering them. This is no work of mine; what do I care for but for sleeping and sucking and playing with my cradle-clothes and being washed in warm water? My friend, it will be much better that no one should hear of such a silly quarrel. The undying gods would laugh at the very thought of

a little babe leaving its cradle to run after cows. I was born but yesterday. My feet are soft, and the ground is hard. But if it be any comfort to thee, I will swear by my father's head (and that is a very great oath) that I have not done this deed, or seen any one else steal your cows, and that I do not know what cows are.'

As he spoke he looked stealthily from one side to the other, while his eyes winked slyly, and he made a long soft whistling sound, as if the words of Phœbus had amused him mightily.. ‘Well, friend,’ said Apollo, with a smile, ‘thou wilt break into many a house, I see, and thy followers after thee; and thy fancy for beef will set many a herdsman grieving. But come down from the cradle, or this sleep will be thy last. Only this honour can I promise thee, to be called the prince of thieves for ever.’ So without more ado Phœbus caught up the babe in his arms, but Hermes gave so mighty a sneeze that he quickly let him fall, and said to him gravely, ‘This is the sign that I shall find my cows: show me, then, the way.’ In great fear Hermes started up and pulled the cradle-clothes over both his ears, as he said, ‘Cruel god, what dost thou seek to do with me? Why worry me thus about cows? I would there were not a cow in all the earth. I stole them not, nor have I

seen any one steal the cows, whatever things cows may be. I know nothing but their name. But come; Zeus must decide the quarrel between us.'

Thus each with his own purpose spake to the other, and their minds grew all the darker, for Phœbus sought only to know where his cows might be, while Hermes strove only to cheat him. So they went quickly and sulkily on, the babe first, and Phœbus following after him, till they came to the heights of Olympus and the home of the mighty Zeus. There he sat on the throne of judgment, and all the undying gods stood around them. Before them in the midst stood Phœbus and the child Hermes, and Zeus said, 'Thou hast brought a fine booty after thy hunt to-day, Phœbus—a child of a day old. A fine matter is this to put before the gods.'

'My father,' said Apollo quickly, 'I have a tale to tell which will show that I am not the only plunderer. After a weary search, I found this babe in the cave of Kyllénê; and a thief he is such as I have never seen whether among gods or men. Yester eve he stole my cattle from the meadow, and drove them straight towards Pylos to the shore of the sounding sea. The tracks left were such that gods and men might well marvel at them. The footprints of the cows on the sand

were as though they were going to my meadows, not away from them ; his own footmarks beggar all words, as if he had gone neither on his feet nor on his hands, and as if the oak tops had suddenly taken to walking. So was it on the sandy soil ; and after this was passed, there remained no marks at all. But an old man saw him driving them on the road to Pylos. There he shut up the cattle at his leisure, and, going to his mother's cave, lay down in his cradle like a spark in a mass of cinders, which an eagle could scarcely spy out. When I taxed him with the theft, he boldly denied it, and told me that he had not seen the cows or heard aught of them, and could not get the reward if one were offered for restoring them.'

So the words of Phœbus were ended, and the child Hermes made obeisance to Zeus, the lord of all the gods, and said, 'Father Zeus, I shall tell thee the truth, for I am a very truthful being, and I know not how to tell a lie. This morning, when the sun was but newly risen, Phœbus came to my mother's cave, looking for cows. He brought no witnesses ; he urged me by force to confess ; he threatened to hurl me into the abyss of Tartarus.<sup>28</sup> Yet he has all the strength of early manhood, while I, as he knows, was born but yesterday, and am not in the least like a cattle-reiver. Believe

me (by thy love for me, thy child), that I have not brought these cows home, or passed beyond my mother's threshold. This is strict truth, Nay, by Helios and the other gods, I swear that I love thee and have respect for Phœbus. Thou knowest that I am guiltless, and, if thou wilt, I will also swear it. But, spite of all his strength, I will avenge myself some day on Phœbus for his unkindness; and then help thou the weaker.'

So spake Hermes, winking his eyes and holding the clothes to his shoulders ; and Zeus laughed aloud at the wiliness of the babe, and bade Phœbus and the child be friends. Then he bowed his head and charged Hermes to show the spot where he had hidden the cattle, and the child obeyed, for none may despise that sign and live. To Pylos they hastened and to the broad stream of Alpheios, and from the fold Hermes drove forth the cattle. But as he stood apart, Apollo beheld the hides flung on the rock, and he asked Hermes, 'How wast thou able, cunning rogue, to flay two cows, thou a child but one day old ? I fear thy might in time to come, and I cannot let thee live.' Again he seized the child, and bound him fast with willow bands, but the child tore them from his body like flax, so that Phœbus marvelled greatly. In

vain Hermes sought a place wherein to hide himself, and great fear came upon him till he thought of his tortoise-lyre. With his bow he touched the strings, and the wave of song swelled out upon the air more full and sweet than ever. He sang of the undying gods and the dark earth, how it was made at the first, and how to each of the gods his own appointed portion was given, till the heart of Apollo was filled with a mighty longing, and he spake to Hermes, and said, ‘Cattle-reiver, wily rogue, thy song is worth fifty head of cattle. We will settle our strife by-and-by. Meanwhile, tell me, was this wondrous gift of song born with thee, or hast thou it as a gift from any god or mortal man? Never on Olympus, from those who cannot die, have I heard such strains as these. They who hear thee may have what they will, be it mirth, or love, or sleep. Great is thy power, and great shall be thy renown, and by my cornel staff I swear that I will not stand in the way of thy honour or deceive thee in anywise.’

Then said Hermes, ‘I grudge thee not my skill, son of Leto, for I seek but thy friendship. Yet thy gifts from Zeus are great. Thou knowest his mind, thou canst declare his will, and reveal what is stored up in time to come for undying

gods or mortal men. This knowledge I fain would have. But my power of song shall this day be thine. Take my lyre, the soother of the wearied, the sweet companion in hours of sorrow or of feasting. To those who come skilled in its language, it can discourse sweetly of all things, and drive away all thoughts that annoy and cares that vex the soul. To those who touch it, not knowing how to draw forth its speech, it will babble strange nonsense, and rave with uncertain moanings. But thy knowledge is born with thee, and so my lyre is thine. Wherefore now let us feed the herds together, and with our care they shall thrive and multiply. There is no more cause for anger.'

So saying, the babe held out the lyre, and Phœbus Apollo took it. In his turn he gave to the child Hermes a glittering scourge, with charge over his flocks and herds. Then, touching the chords of the lyre, he filled the air with sweet music, and they both took their way to Olympus, and Zeus was glad at heart to see that the wrath of Apollo had passed away. But Phœbus dreaded yet the wiles of Hermes, and said, 'I fear me much, child of Maia, that in time to come thou mayest steal both my harp and my bow, and take away my honour among men. Come now, and swear to me by the dark water of Styx that thou

wilt never do me wrong.' Then Hermes bowed his head, and sware never to steal anything from Apollo, and never to lay hands on his holy shrine; and Phœbus sware that of all the undying gods there should be none so dear to him as Hermes. 'And of this love,' he said, 'I will give thee a pledge. My golden rod shall guard thee, and teach thee all that Zeus may say to me for the well or ill doing of gods or men. But the higher knowledge for which thou didst pray may not be thine; for that is hidden in the mind of Zeus, and I have sworn a great oath that none shall learn it from me. But the man who comes to me with true signs, I will never deceive; and he who puts trust in false omens and then comes to inquire at my shrine,<sup>29</sup> shall be answered according to his folly, but his offering shall go into my treasure-house. Yet further, son of Maia, in the clefts of Parnassus far away dwell the winged Thriæ,<sup>30</sup> who taught me long ago the secret things of times to come. Go thou then to the three sisters, and thus shalt thou test them. If they have eaten of the honeycomb before they speak, they will answer thee truly; but if they lack the sweet food of the gods, they will seek to lead astray those who come to them. These I give thee for thy counsellors; only follow them warily; and have

thou dominion over all flocks and herds, and over all living things that feed on the wide earth; and be thou the guide to lead the souls of mortal men to the dark kingdom of Hades.'

So was the love of Apollo for Hermes made sure; and Hermes hath his place amongst all the deathless gods and dying men. Nevertheless, the sons of men have from him no great gain, for all night long he vexes them with his treacherous wiles.<sup>31</sup>

## IAMOS.

ON the banks of Alpheios, Evadnē watched over her new-born babe, till she fled away because she feared the wrath of Æpytos, who ruled in Phæsana. The tears streamed down her cheeks as she prayed to Phœbus Apollo who dwells at Delphi, and said, ‘Lord of the bright day, look on thy child, and guard him when he lies forsaken, for I may no longer tarry near him.’ So Evadnē fled away; and Phœbus sent two serpents, who fed the babe with honey as he lay amid the flowers which clustered round him. And ever more and more, through all the land went forth the saying of Phœbus, that the child of Evadnē should grow up mighty in wisdom and in the power of telling the things that should happen in the time to come. Then Æpytos asked of all who dwelt in his house to tell him where he might find the son of Evadnē. But they knew not where the child lay, for the serpents had hidden him far away in a thicket, where the wild flowers sheltered him from wind and heat. Long

time they searched amid the tall reeds which clothe the banks of Alpheios, until at last they found the babe lying on a bed of violets. So Æpytos took the child and called his name Iamos, and he grew up brave and wise of heart, pondering well the signs of coming grief and joy, and the tokens of hidden things which he saw in the heaven above him or on the wide earth beneath. He spake but little to the youths and maidens who dwelt in the house of Æpytos, but he wandered on the bare hills or by the stream side, musing on many things. And so it came to pass that one night, when the stars glimmered softly in the sky, Iamos plunged beneath the waters of Alpheios, and prayed to Phœbus who dwells at Delphi, and to Poseidon, the lord of the broad sea ; and he besought them to open his eyes, that he might reveal to the sons of men the things which of themselves they could not see. Then they led him away to the high rocks which look down on the plain of Pisa, and they said, ‘Look yonder, child of Evadnê, where the white stream of Alpheios winds its way gently to the sea. Here, in the days which are to come, Heracles, the son of the mighty Zeus, shall gather together the sons of Hellen, and give them in the solemn games the mightiest of all bonds ;<sup>32</sup> hither shall

they come to know the will of Zeus, and here shall it be thy work and the work of thy children to read to them the signs which of themselves they cannot understand.' Then Phœbus Apollo touched his ears, and straightway the voices of the birds spake to him clearly of the things which were to come, and he heard their words as a man listens to the speech of his friend. So Iamos prospered exceedingly, for the men of all the Argive land sought aid from his wisdom, and laid rich gifts at his feet. And he taught his children after him to speak the truth and to deal truly, so that none envied their great wealth, and all men spake well of the wise children of Iamos.

## SKYLLA.

FROM the turret of her father's house, Skylla, the daughter of Nisos, watched the ships of king Minos,<sup>33</sup> as they drew near from the island of Crete. Their white sails, and the spears of the Cretan warriors, sparkled in the sunshine, as the crested waves rose and fell, carrying the long billows to the shore. As she watched the goodly sight, Skylla thought sadly of the days that were gone, when her father had sojourned as a guest in the halls of king Minos, and she had looked on his face as on the face of a friend. But now there was strife between the chieftains of Crete and Megara, for Androgeôs, the son of Minos, had been slain by evil men as he journeyed from Megara to Athens, and Minos was come hither with his warriors to demand the price of his blood. But when the herald came with the message of Minos, the face of Nisos the king flushed with anger, as he said, 'Go thy way to him that sent thee, and tell him that he who is guarded by the undying gods cares not for the wrath of men

whose spears shall be snapped like bulrushes.' Then said the herald, 'I cannot read thy riddle, chieftain of Megara; but the blood of the gods runs in the veins of Minos, and it cannot be that the son of Europa shall fall under the hands of thee or of thy people.'

The sun went down in a flood of golden glory behind the purple heights of Geraneia; and as the mists of evening fell upon the land, the warriors of Minos made ready for the onset on the morrow. But when the light of Eôs flushed the eastern sky, and the men of Crete went forth to the battle, their strength and their brave deeds availed them nothing, for the arms of the mightiest became weak as the hands of a little child, because the secret spell, in which lay the strength of the undying gods, guarded the city of Nisos. And so it came to pass that, as day by day they fought in vain against the walls of Megara, the spirit of the men of Crete waxed feeble, and many said that they came not thither to fight against the deathless gods.

But each day as Minos led his men against the city, the daughter of Nisos had looked forth from her turret, and she saw his face, beautiful as in the days when she had sojourned in his house at Gnossos, and flushed with the pride and eagerness

of war. Then the heart of Skylla was filled with a strange love, and she spake musingly within herself, ‘To what end is this strife of armed men ? Love is beyond all treasures, and brighter for me than the love of others would be one kindly look from the bright son of Europa. I know the spell which keeps the city of the Megarians; and where is the evil of the deed, if I take the purple lock of hair which the gods have given to my father as a pledge that, so long as it remains untouched, no harm shall befall his people ? If I give it to Minos, the struggle is ended, and it may be that I shall win his love.’

So, when the darkness of night fell again upon the earth, and all the sons of men were buried in a deep sleep, Skylla entered stealthily into her father’s chamber, and shore off the purple lock in which lay his strength and the strength of his people. Then, as the tints of early morning stole across the dark heavens, the watchman of the Cretans beheld the form of a woman as she drew nigh to them and bade them lead her to the tent of king Minos. When she was brought before him, with downcast face she bowed herself to the earth and said, ‘I have sojourned in thy halls in the days that are gone, when there was peace between thee and the house of my father Nisos.

O Minos, peace is better than war, and of all treasures the most precious is love. Look on me then gently, as in the former days, for at a great price do I seek thy kindness. In this purple lock is the strength of my father and of his people.' Then a strange smile passed over the face of Minos, as he said, 'The gifts of fair maidens must not be lightly cast aside; the requital shall be made when the turmoil of strife is ended.'

With a mighty shout the Cretan warriors went forth to the onset as the fiery horses of Helios rose up with his chariot into the kindled heaven. Straightway the walls of Megara fell, and the men of Crete burst into the house of Nisos. So the city was taken, and Minos made ready to go against the men of Athens, for on them also he sought to take vengeance for the death of his son Androgeos. But even as he hastened to his ship, Skylla stood before him on the sea-shore. 'Thy victory is from me,' she said; 'where is the requital of my gift?' Then Minos answered, 'She who cares not for the father that has cherished her has her own reward; and the gift which thou didst bring me is beyond human recompense.' The light southern breeze swelled the outspread sail, and the ship of Minos danced gaily over the rippling waters. For a moment the daughter of Nisos

stood musing on the shore. Then she stretched forth her arms, as, with a low cry of bitter anguish, she said, 'O Love, thy sting is cruel; and my life dies poisoned by the smile of Aphrodité!' So the waters closed over the daughter of Nisos, as she plunged into the blue depths; but the strife which vexes the sons of men follows her still, when the eagle swoops down from the cloud for his prey in the salt sea.<sup>34</sup>

## DIONYSOS.

IN the dark land beneath the earth, where wander the ghosts of men, lay Semelē, the daughter of Cadmus, while her child Dionysos grew up full of strength and beauty on the flowery plain of Orchomenos. But the wrath of the lady Hérê still burned alike against the mother and the child. No pity felt she for the hapless maiden whom the fiery lightning of Zeus had slain; and so in the prison-house of Hades Semelē mourned for the love which she had lost, waiting till her child should lead her forth to the banquet of the gods. But for him the wiles of Hérê boded long toil and grievous peril. On the land and on the sea strange things befell him, but from all dangers his own strong arm and the love of Zeus, his father, rescued him. Thus throughout the land men spake of his beauty and his strength, and said that he was worthy to be the child of the maiden who had dared to look on the majesty of Zeus. At length the days of his youth were ended, and a great yearning filled his heart to

wander through the earth and behold the cities and the ways of men. So from Orchomenos Dionysos journeyed to the sea-shore, and he stood on a jutting rock to gaze on the tumbling waters. The glad music of the waves fell upon his ear and filled his soul with a wild joy. His dark locks streamed gloriously over his shoulders, and his purple robe rustled in the soft summer breeze. Before him on the blue waters the ships danced merrily in the sparkling sunlight, as they hastened from shore to shore on the errands of war or peace. Presently a ship drew near to the beach. Her white sail was lowered hastily to the deck, and five of her crew leaped out and plunged through the sea-foam to the shore, near the rock on which stood Dionysos. ‘Come with us,’ they said, with rough voices, as they seized him in their brawny arms. ‘It is not every day that Tyrrhenian mariners fall in with youths like thee.’ With rude jests they dragged him to the ship, and there made ready to bind him. ‘A brave youth and fair he is,’ they said; ‘we shall not lack bidders when we put forth our goods for sale.’ So round his limbs they fastened stout withy bands, but they fell from off him as withered leaves fall from trees in autumn; and a careless smile played on his face as he sat down and looked

calmly on the robbers who stood before him. Then on a sudden the voice of the helmsman was heard as he shouted, ‘Fools, what do ye? The wrath of Zeus is hurrying you to your doom. This youth is not of mortal race; and who can tell which of the undying gods has put on this beautiful form? Send him straightway from the ship in peace, if ye fear not a deadly storm as we cross the open sea.’ Loud laughed the crew, as their chief answered jeeringly, ‘Look out for the breeze, wise helmsman, and draw up the sail to the wind. That is more thy task than to busy thyself with our doings. Fear not for the boy. The withy bands were but weak; it is no great marvel that he shook them off. He shall go with us, and before we reach Egypt or Cyprus, or the land of the Hyperboreans, doubtless he will tell us his name and the name of his father and his mother. Fear not; we have found a godsend.’

So the sail was drawn up to the mast, and it swelled proudly before the breeze as the ship dashed through the crested waves. And still the sun shone brightly down on the water, and the soft white clouds floated lazily in the heaven, as the mighty Dionysos began to show signs and wonders before the robbers who had seized him. Over the deck ran a stream of purple wine, and a fragrance

as of a heavenly banquet filled the air. Over mast and sailyard clambered the clustering vine, and dark masses of grapes hung glistening from the branches. The ivy twined in tangled masses round the tackling, and bright garlands shone, like jewelled crowns, on every oar-pin. Then a great terror fell on all, as they cried to the old helmsman, ‘Quick, turn the ship to the shore; there is no hope for us here.’ But there followed a mightier wonder still. A loud roar broke upon the air, and a tawny lion stood before them, with a grim and grisly bear by his side.<sup>35</sup> Cowering like pitiful slaves, the Tyrrhenians crowded to the stern, and crouched round the good helmsman. Then the lion sprang and seized the chief, and the men leaped in their agony over the ship’s side. But the power of Dionysos followed them still; and a change came over their bodies as they heard a voice which said, ‘In the form of dolphins shall ye wander through the sea for many generations. No rest shall ye have by night or by day, while ye fly from the ravenous sharks that shall chase you through the seas.’

But before the old helmsman again stood Dionysos, the young and fair, in all the glory of undying beauty. Again his dark locks flowed gently over his shoulders, and the purple robe

rustled softly in the breeze. ‘Fear not,’ he said, ‘good friend and true, because thou hast aided one who is sprung from the deathless race of the gods. I am Dionysos, the child of Zeus, the lord of the wine-cup and the revel. Thou hast stood by me in the hour of peril; wherefore my power shall shield thee from the violence of evil men, and soothe thee in a green old age, till thine eyes close in the sleep of death and thou goest forth to dwell among brave heroes and good men in the asphodel meadows of Elysium.’

Then, at the bidding of Dionysos, the north wind came and wafted the ship to the land of Egypt, where Proteus was king. And so began the long wanderings of the son of Semelê, through the regions of the Ethiopians and the Indians, towards the rising of the sun. Whithersoever he went, the women of the land gathered round him with wild cries and songs, and he showed them of his secret things, punishing grievously all who set at nought the new laws which he ordained. So, at his word, Lycurgus, the Edonian chieftain, was slain by his people, and none dared any more to speak against Dionysos, until he came back <sup>36</sup> to the city where Semelê, his mother, had been smitten by the lightnings of Zeus.

## ASCLEPIOS.

ON the shores of the lake Bœbæis, the golden-haired Apollo saw and loved Corônis, the beautiful daughter of Phlegyas.<sup>37</sup> Many a time they wandered beneath the branching elms while the dewdrops glistened like jewels on the leaves, or sat beneath the ivy bowers as the light of evening faded from the sky and the blue veil of mist fell upon the sleeping hills. But at length the day came when Apollo must journey to the western land, and as he held Corônis in his arms, his voice fell softly and sadly on her ear. ‘I go,’ he said, ‘to a land that is very far off, but surely I will return. More precious to me than aught else on the wide earth is thy love, Corônis. Let not its flower fade, but keep it fresh and pure as now, till I come to thee again. The dancing Horæ trip quickly by, Corônis, and when they bring the day on which I may clasp thee in mine arms once more, it may be that I shall find thee watching proudly over the child of our love.’

He was gone; and for Corônis it seemed as

though the sun had ceased to shine in the heaven. For many a day she cared not to wander by the winding shore in the light of early morning, or to rest in the myrtle bowers as the flush of evening faded from the sky. Her thoughts went back to the days that were past, when Apollo the golden-haired made her glad with the music of his voice. But at length a stranger came to the Bœbæan land, and dwelt in the house of Phlegyas, and the spell of his glorious beauty fell upon Corônis, and dimmed the love which she had borne for Apollo who was far away. Again for her the sun shone brightly in the heaven, and the birds filled the air with a joyous music; but the tale went swiftly through the land, and Apollo heard the evil tidings as he journeyed back with his sister Artemis to the house of Phlegyas. A look of sorrow that may not be told passed over his fair face; but Artemis stretched forth her hand towards the flashing sun and sware that the maiden should rue her fickleness. Soon, on the shore of the lake Bœbæis, Corônis lay smitten by the spear which may never miss its mark, and her child Asclepios lay a helpless babe by her side. Then the voice of Apollo was heard saying, ‘Slay not the child with the mother;<sup>38</sup> he is born to do great things; but bear him to the wise centaur Cheiron, and bid

him train the boy in all his wisdom and teach him to do brave deeds, that men may praise his name in the generations that shall be hereafter.'

So in the deep glens of Pelion the child Asclepios grew up to manhood, under the teaching of Cheiron the wise and good. In all the land there was none that might vie with him in strength of body; but the people marvelled yet more at his wisdom, which passed the wisdom of the sons of men, for he had learnt the power of every herb and leaf to stay the pangs of sickness and bring back health to the wasted form. Day by day the fame of his doings was spread abroad more widely through the land, so that all who were sick hastened to Asclepios and besought his help. But soon there went forth a rumour that the strength of death had been conquered by him, and that Athénê, the mighty daughter of Zeus, had taught Asclepios how to bring back the dead from the dark kingdom of Hades. Then, as the number of those whom he brought from the gloomy Stygian land increased more and more, Hades went in hot anger to Olympus, and spake bitter words against the son of Corônis, so that the heart of Zeus was stirred with a great fear lest the children of men should be delivered from death and defy the power of the gods. So Zeus bowed his head, and

the lightnings flashed from heaven, and Asclepios was smitten down by the scathing thunderbolt.

Then a mighty and terrible grief stirred the soul of the golden-haired Apollo. The sun shone dimly from the heaven; the birds were silent in the darkened groves; the trees bowed down their heads in sorrow; and the hearts of all the sons of men fainted within them, because the healer of their pains and sickness lived no more upon the earth. But the wrath of Apollo was mightier than his grief, and he smote the giant Cyclopes who shaped the fiery lightnings far down in the depths of the burning mountain.<sup>39</sup> Then the anger of Zeus was kindled against his own child, the golden-haired Apollo, and he spake the word that he should be banished from the home of the gods to the dark Stygian land. But the lady Leto fell at his knees and besought him for her child, and the doom was given that a whole year long he should serve as a bondman in the house of Admetos, who ruled in Pheræ.

## ADMETOS.

THERE was high feasting in the halls of Pheres, because Admetos, his son, had brought home Alkéstis, the fairest of all the daughters of Pelias,<sup>40</sup> to be his bride. The minstrels sang of the glories of the house of Pheræ, and of the brave deeds of Admetos—how, by the aid of the golden-haired Apollo, he had yoked the lion and the boar, and made them drag his chariot to Iolcos, for Pelias had said that only to one who came thus would he give his daughter Alkéstis to be his wife. So the sound of mirth and revelry echoed through the hall, and the red wine was poured forth in honour of Zeus and all the gods, each by his name; but the name of Artemis only was forgotten, and her wrath burned sore against the house of Admetos.

But one, mightier yet than Artemis, was nigh at hand to aid him, for Apollo, the son of Leto, served as a bondman in the home of Pheres, because he had slain the Cyclopes who forged the thunderbolts of Zeus. No mortal blood flowed in his veins; but, though he could neither grow old

nor die, nor could any of the sons of men do him hurt, yet all loved him for his gentle dealing, for all things had prospered in the land from the day when he came to the house of Admetos. And so it came to pass that, when the sacrifice of the marriage feast was ended, he spake to Admetos and said, ‘The anger of Artemis my sister is kindled against thee, and it may be that she will smite thee with her spear which can never miss its mark. But thou hast been to me a kind task-master; and though I am here as thy bondservant, yet have I power still with my father Zeus, and I have obtained for thee this boon, that, if thou art smitten by the spear of Artemis, thou shalt not die, if thou canst find one who in thy stead will go down to the dark kingdom of Hades.’

Many a time the sun rose up into the heaven and sank down to sleep beneath the western waters; and still the hours went by full of deep joy to Admetos and his wife Alkéstis, for their hearts were knit together in a pure love, and no cloud of strife spread its dark shadow over their souls. Once only Admetos spake to her of the words of Apollo, and Alkéstis answered, with a smile, ‘Where is the pain of death, my husband, for those who love truly? Without thee I care not to live; wherefore, to die for thee will be a boon.’

Once again there was high feasting in the house of Admetos, for Heracles, the mighty son of Alcménē, had come thither as he journeyed through many lands, doing the will of the false Eurystheus. But, even as the minstrels sang the praises of the chieftains of Pheræ, the flush of life faded from the face of Admetos, and he felt that the hour of which Apollo had warned him was come. But soon the blood came back tingling through his veins, when he thought of the sacrifice which alone could save him from the sleep of death. Yet what will not a man do for his life? and how shall he withstand when the voice of love pleads on his side? So once again the fair Alkéstis looked lovingly upon him as she said, ‘There is no darkness for me in the land of Hades, if only I die for thee;’ and even as she spake, the spell passed from Admetos, and the strength of the daughter of Pelias ebbed slowly away.

The sound of mirth and feasting was hushed. The harps of the minstrels hung silent on the wall, and men spake in whispering voices, for the awful Mœræ were at hand to bear Alkéstis to the shadowy kingdom. On the couch lay her fair form, pale as the white lily which floats on the blue water, and beautiful as Eôs when her light

dies out of the sky in the evening.<sup>41</sup> Yet a little while, and the strife was ended, and Admetos mourned in bitterness and shame for the love which he had lost.

Then the soul of the brave Heracles was stirred within him, and he sware that the Mœræ should not win the victory. So he departed in haste, and far away in the unseen land he did battle with the powers of death, and rescued Alkéstis from Hades, the stern and rugged king.

So once more she stood before Admetos, more radiant in her beauty than in the former days, and once more in the halls of Pheræ echoed the sound of high rejoicing, and the minstrels sang of the mighty deed of the good and brave Heracles, as he went on his way from the home of Admetos to do in other lands the bidding of the mean Eurystheus.

## DEUCALION.

FROM his throne on the high Olympus, Zeus looked down on the children of men, and saw that everywhere they followed only their lusts and cared nothing for right or for law. And ever, as their hearts waxed grosser in their wickedness, they devised for themselves new rites to appease the anger of the gods, till the whole earth was filled with blood. Far away in the hidden glens of the Arcadian hills the sons of Lycaon feasted and spake proud words against the majesty of Zeus, and Zeus himself came down from his throne to see their way and their doings.

The sun was sinking down in the sky when an old man drew nigh to the gate of Lycosura. His grey locks streamed in the breeze, and his beard fell in tangled masses over his tattered mantle. With staff in hand he plodded wearily on his way, listening to the sound of revelry which struck upon his ear. At last he came to the Agora, and the sons of Lycaon crowded round him. ‘So the wise seer is come,’ they said; ‘what

tale hast thou to tell us, old man? Canst thou sing of the days when the earth came forth from Chaos? Thou art old enough to have been there to see.' Then with rude jeering they seized him and placed him on the ground near to the place where they were feasting. 'We have done a great sacrifice to Zeus this day; and thy coming is timely, for thou shalt share the banquet.' So they placed before him a dish, and the food that was in it was the flesh of man, for with the blood of men they thought to turn aside the anger of the gods.<sup>42</sup> But the old man thrust aside the dish, and, as he rose up, the weariness of age passed away from his face, and the sons of Lycaon<sup>43</sup> were scorched by the glory of his countenance; for Zeus stood before them and scathed them all with his lightnings, and their ashes cumbered the ground.

Then Zeus returned to his home on Olympus, and he gave the word that a flood of waters should be let loose upon the earth, that the sons of men might die for their great wickedness. So the west wind rose in his might, and the dark rain-clouds veiled the whole heaven, for the winds of the north which drive away the mists and vapours were shut up in their prison-house. On hill and valley burst the merciless rain, and the

rivers, loosened from their courses, rushed over the wide plains and up the mountain side. From his home on the highlands of Phthia, Deucalion looked forth on the angry sky, and, when he saw the waters swelling in the valleys beneath, he called Pyrrha, his wife, the daughter of Epimetheus, and said to her, ‘The time is come of which my father, the wise Prometheus, forewarned me. Make ready, therefore, the ark which I have built, and place in it all that we may need for food while the flood of waters is out upon the earth. Far away on the crags of Caucasus the iron nails rend the flesh of Prometheus, and the vulture gnaws his heart, but the words which he spake are being fulfilled, that for the wickedness of men the flood of waters would come upon the earth; for Zeus himself is but the servant of one that is mightier than he, and must do his bidding.’

Then Pyrrha hastened to make all things ready, and they waited until the waters rose up to the highlands of Phthia and floated away the ark of Deucalion. The fishes swam amidst the old elm-groves, and twined amongst the gnarled boughs of the oaks, while on the face of the waters were tossed the bodies of men; and Deucalion looked on the dead faces of stalwart warriors, of maidens,

and of babes, as they rose and fell upon the heaving waves. Eight days the ark was borne on the flood, while the waters covered the hills, and all the children of men died save a few who found a place of shelter on the summits of the mountains. On the ninth day the ark rested on the heights of Parnassus, and Deucalion, with his wife Pyrrha, stepped forth upon the desolate earth. Hour by hour the waters fled down the valleys, and dead fishes and sea-monsters lay caught in the tangled branches of the forest. But, far as the eye could reach, there was no sign of living thing, save of the vultures who wheeled in circles through the heaven to swoop upon their prey; and Deucalion looked on Pyrrha; and their hearts were filled with a grief which cannot be told. ‘We know not,’ he said, ‘whether there live any one of all the sons of men, or in what hour the sleep of death may fall upon us. But the mighty being who sent the flood has saved us from its waters: to him let us build an altar and bring our thank-offering.’ So the altar was built, and Zeus had respect to the prayer of Deucalion, and presently Hermes the messenger stood before him. ‘Ask what thou wilt,’ he said, ‘and it shall be granted thee, for in thee alone of all the sons of men hath Zeus found a clean hand and a pure heart.’ Then

Deucalion bowed himself before Hermes and said, ‘The whole earth lies desolate; I pray thee, let men be seen upon it once more.’ ‘Even so shall it come to pass,’ said Hermes, ‘if ye will cover your faces with your mantles and cast the bones of your mother behind you as ye go upon your way.’

So Hermes departed to the home of Zeus, and Deucalion pondered his words, till the wisdom of his father Prometheus showed him that his mother was the earth, and that they were to cast the stones behind them as they went down from Parnassus. Then they did each as they were bidden, and the stones which Deucalion threw were turned into men, but those which were thrown by Pyrrha became women; and the people which knew neither father nor mother went forth to their toil throughout the wide earth. The sun shone brightly in the heaven and dried up the slime beneath them; yet was their toil but a weary labour, and so hath it been until this day—a struggle hard as the stones from which they have been taken.<sup>44</sup>

But, as the years passed on, there were children born to Pyrrha and Deucalion,<sup>45</sup> and the old race of men still lived on the heights of Phthia. From

Hellen, their son, sprang the mighty tribes of the Hellenes, and from Protogeneia, their daughter, was born Aëthlios, the man of toil and suffering, the father of Endymion the fair who sleeps on the hill of Latmos.<sup>46</sup>

## THESEUS.

MANY a long year ago a little child was playing on the white sands of the bay of Trœzen. His golden locks streamed in the breeze as he ran amongst the rippling waves which flung themselves lazily on the beach. Sometimes he clapped his hands in glee as the water washed over his feet, and he stopped again to look with wondering eyes at the strange things which were basking on the sunny shore, or gazed on the mighty waters which stretched away bright as a sapphire stone into the far distance. But presently some sadder thought troubled the child, for the look of gladness passed away from his face, and he went slowly to his mother, who sat among the weed-grown rocks, watching her child at play.

'Mother,' said the boy, 'I am very happy here, but may I not know to-day why I never see my father as other children do? I am not now so very young, and I think that you feel sometimes lonely, for your face looks sad and sorrowful as if you were grieving for some one who is gone away.'

Fondly and proudly the mother looked on her boy, and smoothed the golden locks on his forehead, as she said, ‘My child, there is much to make us happy, and it may be that many days of gladness are in store for us both. But there is labour and toil for all, and many a hard task awaits thee, my son. Only have a brave heart, and turn away from all things mean and foul, and strength will be given thee to conquer the strongest enemy. Sit down then here by my side, and I will tell thee a tale which may make thee sad, but which must not make thee unhappy, for none can do good to others who waste their lives in weeping. Many summers have come and gone since the day when a stranger drew nigh to the house of my father Pittheus. The pale light of evening was fading from the sky; but we could see, by his countenance and the strength of his stalwart form, that he was come of a noble race and could do brave deeds. When Pittheus went forth from the threshold to meet him, the stranger grasped his hand and said, “I come to claim the rights of our ancient friendship; for our enemies have grown too mighty for us, and Pandion my father rules no more in Athens. Here then let me tarry till I can find a way to punish the men who have driven away their king and made his

children wanderers on the earth." So Ægeus sojourned in my father's house, and soon he won my love, and I became his wife. Swiftly and happily the days went by, and one thing only troubled me, and this was the thought that one day he must leave me, to fight with his enemies and place his father again upon his throne. But even this thought was forgotten for a while, when Ægeus looked on thee for the first time, and, stretching forth his hands towards heaven, said, "O Zeus, that dwellest in the dark cloud, look down on my child, and give him strength that he may be a better man than his father; and if thou orderest that his life shall be one of toil, still let him have the joy which is the lot of all who do their work with a cheerful heart and keep their hands from all defiling things." Then the days passed by more quickly and happily than ever; but at last there came messengers from Athens, to tell him that the enemies of Pandion were at strife among themselves, and that the time was come that Ægeus should fight for his father's house. Not many days after this we sat here, watching thee at play among the weeds and flowers that climb among the rocks, when thy father put his arms gently round me and said, "Æthra, best gift of all that the gods have ever given to me, I leave

thee to go to my own land ; and I know not what things may befall me there, or whether I may return hither to take thee to dwell with me at Athens. But forget not the days that are gone, and faint not for lack of hope that we may meet again in the days that are coming. Be a brave mother to our child, that so he too may grow up brave and pure ; and when he is old enough to know what he must do, tell him that he is born of a noble race, and that he must one day fight stoutly to win the heritage of his fathers." And now, my son, thou seest yonder rock, over which the wild briars have clambered. No hands have moved it since the day when thy father lifted it up and placed beneath it his sword and his sandals. Then he put back the stone as it was before, and said to me, " When thou thinkest fit, tell our child that he must wait until he is able to lift this stone. Then must he put my sandals on his feet, and gird my sword on his side, and journey to the city of his forefathers." From that day, my child, I have never seen thy father's face, and the time is often weary, although the memory of the old days is sweet, and my child is by my side to cheer me with his love. So now thou knowest something of the task that lies before thee. Think of thy father's words, and make thyself ready for

the toil and danger that may fall to thy lot in time to come.'<sup>47</sup>

The boy looked wistfully into his mother's face, and a strange feeling of love and hope and strength filled his heart, as he saw the tears start to her eyes when the tale was ended. His arms were clasped around her neck; but he said only, 'Mother, I will wait patiently till I am strong enough to lift the stone; but before that time comes, perhaps my father may come back from Athens.'

So for many a year more the days went by, and the boy Theseus grew up brave, truthful, and strong. None who looked upon him grudged him his beauty, for his gentleness left no room for envy; and his mother listened with a proud and glad heart to the words with which the people of the land told of his kindly deeds. At length the days of his youth were ended, but *Ægeus* came not back; and Theseus went to *Æthra*, and said, 'The time is come, my mother; I must see this day whether I am strong enough to lift this stone.' And *Æthra* answered gently, 'Be it as thou wilt, and as the undying gods will it, my son.' Then he went up to the rock, and nerved himself for a mighty effort, and the stone yielded slowly to his strength, and the sword and sandals lay before him.<sup>48</sup> Presently he stood before *Æthra*, and to

her it seemed that the face of Theseus was as the face of one of the bright heroes who dwell in the halls of Zeus. A flush of glorious beauty lit up his countenance, as she girt the sword to his side and said, ‘The gods prosper thee, my son; and they will prosper thee, if thou livest in time to come as thou hast lived in the days that are gone.’

So Theseus bade his mother farewell, there on the white sea-shore, where long ago he had asked her first to tell him of his name and kindred. Sadly, yet with a good hope, he set out on his journey. The blue sea lay before him, and the white sails of ships glistened as they danced on the heaving waters. But Theseus had vowed a vow that he would do battle with the evil-doers who filled the land with blood, and for terror of whom the travellers walked in byways. So at Epidauros he fought with the cruel Periphêtes, and smote him with his own club; and at the Megarian isthmus he seized the robber Sinis, and tare him to pieces between the trunks of pines, even as he had been wont to do with the wayfarers who fell into his hands. Then in the thickets of Crommyon he slew the huge sow that ravaged the fair cornfields, and on the borderland he fought a sore fight with Skiron, who plundered all who came in his path, and, making them wash his feet, hurled them, as

they stooped, down the cliffs which hung over the surging sea. Even so did Theseus to him, and, journeying on to the banks of Kephîsos, stretched the robber Procrustes on the bed on which he had twisted and tortured the limbs of his victims till they died.

Thus, amid the joyous shoutings of the people whom he had set free, Theseus entered into the city of his fathers ; and the rumour of him was brought to *Ægeus* the king. Then the memory of the days that were gone came back to *Ægeus*, and his heart smote him as he thought within himself that this must be the child of *Æthra*, whom he had left mourning on the shore of Trœzen. But soon there was a strife in the city, for among the mightiest of the people were many who mocked at Theseus and said, ‘Who is this stranger that men should exalt him thus, as though he came of the race of heroes ? Let him show that he is the child of *Ægeus*, if he would win the heritage which he claims.’ So was Theseus brought before the king, and a blush of shame passed over the old man’s face when he saw the sword and sandals which he had left beneath the great stone near the Trœzenian shore. Few words only he spake of welcome, and none of love or kindness for his child or for the wife

who still yearned for the love of the former days. Then, at his father's bidding, Theseus made ready to go forth once again on his path of toil, and he chafed not against the hard lot which had fallen to his portion. Only he said, 'The love of a father would sweeten my labour; but my mother's love is with me still, and the battle is for right and for law.'

So in after-times the minstrels sang of the glorious deeds of Theseus the brave and fair. They told how at the bidding of his father he went forth from the gates of Athens and smote the bull which ravaged the broad plains of Marathon, and how in the secret mazes of the labyrinth he smote the Minotauros. They sang of his exploits in the day when the Amazons did battle with the men of Athens—how he went with Meleagros and his chieftains to the chase of the boar in Calydon—how with the heroes in the ship Argo he brought back the golden fleece from Colchis. They told how at the last he went down with Peirithoös his comrade into the gloomy kingdom of Hades and seized on the daughter of Dêmêtêr, to bring her to the land of living men. They sang of the fierce wrath of Hades when his lightnings burst forth and smote Peirithoös—of the dark prison-house where Theseus lay while

many a rolling year went round, until at the last the mighty Heracles passed the borders of the shadowy land and set the captive free.

And so it was that, when the heroes had passed to the home of Zeus and the banquet of the gods, the glory of Theseus was as the glory of the brave son of Alcméne who toiled for the false Eurystheus ; and ever, in the days of feasting, the minstrels linked together the names of Heracles and of Theseus.<sup>49</sup>

## LAÏOS.

ON the throne of Cadmos, in the great city of Thebes, sat Laïos, the son of Labdacos. He had passed through many and sore troubles since his father died, for Amphion and Zethos, the sons of Antiopê, had driven him from his kingdom, and for a long time Laïos dwelt in a strange land. But now he trusted to live in peace with his wife Iocastê, the daughter of Mencekeus, and to die happily in a good old age. Still, although all things seemed to go well with him, he could not forget the words which Phœbus Apollo spake when he sent to Delphi to ask what should befall him in the after days ; and so it came to pass that, while others rejoiced to hear the merry laughter of children in their homes, Laïos trembled when he heard the tidings that a son had been born to him. For the warning was that he should be slain by his own child.<sup>50</sup>

Many days he spent in sadness and gloom, and he spake no word of love or tenderness to Iocastê, nor did he look on the child as he lay helpless in

his cradle. At last he bade his servants to take the child and leave him on the rugged heights of Kithairôn. So Iocastê sat in silence although her heart was breaking with grief, for she knew that it was vain to plead for the life of her babe; and presently the servants set forth from the house of Laïos to go to the mountain where his flocks were feeding. There, in a hollow cleft, they placed the child, and, as they went away, they said, ‘If the nymphs see him not as they wander along the rough hillside, Laïos will have no need to fear the warnings of Apollo.’

So once more there was seeming peace in the king’s house at Thebes; and the grief of Iocastê was soothed as the months passed by, for she said, ‘It is better that my child should sleep the sleep of death than that he should live to slay his father.’

But the danger had not passed away, for the babe was in the house of Polybos, who ruled at Corinth. Once had the sun gone down beneath the sea, and once had the light of Eôs tinged the eastern sky, when a shepherd who tended his flocks on the cool hillside saw the babe wrapped in his white shroud. Then his heart was touched with pity, and he said, ‘I will take him to my master’s house; for if his parents will it not that

the child should live, it will profit nothing to take him back to Thebes, and he cannot do harm to any one in the Corinthian land.'

So Meropé, the wife of Polybos, received the babe with great gladness, for she had no child; and she called his name Oedipus, because his feet were swollen with the linen bands which were bound about them when they took him away from the house of Laios. Many times the year went round, and Oedipus grew up with fair and ruddy countenance, and all men loved him. No cloud dimmed the brightness of his childhood and his youth, for Polybos and Meropé looked on him with a happy pride, and thought how the love of Oedipus should cheer them in the days of weakness and old age. So the fame of the young man was spread abroad, for he was foremost in every sport and game, and none returned from the chase more laden with booty. But one day it came to pass that there was a feast in the house of Polybos, and one of the guests, whom Oedipus had beaten in the foot-race, spake out in his anger and said that he was not in very truth the child of Meropé.

The feast went on with mirth and song; but there was a dark cloud on the face of Oedipus, for the words of the stranger had sunk deep in his heart, and he sate still and silent till the

banquet was ended. When the morning was come, he went to Meropê and said, ‘Tell me the truth, my mother; am I not indeed thy son?’ Then she cast her arms around him and said, ‘Who hath beguiled thee thus, Œdipus? Can any know better than I that thou art my child indeed? and never was a son more dear to his parents than thou art to us.’ But, although he asked no more questions, yet after a while the doubt came back, and he said within himself, ‘None can be more tender and loving than Meropê, but she did not tell me plainly that I really am her son.’ So in the darkness of the night he went sadly from the home where he had lived without care or trouble till the misery of this doubt came upon him. Once more he passed along the heathy sides of Kithairôn, not knowing that there he had been cast forth to die; and he journeyed on to the shrine of Phœbus Apollo at Delphi. There, as he stood before the holy place, a voice came to him which said, ‘Thy doom is that thou shalt slay thy father.’

Then Œdipus was bowed down with the weight of his fear and sorrow; and he resolved within himself that he would never go back to Corinth, that so he might not become the slayer of Polybos. So he went away from Delphi, heavy and dis-

pleased, and he journeyed on in moody silence, with his heart full of bitter thoughts. He cared not whither the road might lead him, and it chanced that as he came near to the meeting of the roads which go to Daulis and to Thebes, he heard suddenly the voice of one who bade him turn aside from the path while his chariot passed by. Then OEdipus started like one awaking from a dream, and looking up he saw an old man sitting in the chariot. An angry flush was on his face, as he charged his servant to thrust aside the stranger who dared to stand in his path. So the servant lifted up his whip to strike OEdipus; and OEdipus said, ‘Who are ye that ye should smite me? and why should I yield to thee, old man, because thou ridest in a fine chariot and seekest to turn others aside from the road which is open for all men?’ But when the driver of the chariot sought again to strike him, OEdipus smote him with the full strength of his arm, so that he sank down from his seat. Then the face of the old man grew pale with fury, and he leaned forth to strike down OEdipus with the dagger which was in his hand. But he smote him not, for OEdipus turned aside the blow, and he struck the old man on his temples, and left him lying dead by the side of the chariot.

So he journeyed onwards; but as he drew near to the great city of Cadmos he saw mothers sitting with their children by the wayside, and the air was filled with their wailing. Their faces were pale as though from a deadly plague, and their limbs quivered as if from mortal fear; and OEdipus said, ‘Children of Cadmos, what evil has befallen you, that ye have fled from your homes and are sunk down thus on the hard earth?’ Then they told him how on a high cliff near the city of Thebes a horrible monster, with a maiden’s face and a lion’s body, sate looking on the plain below, and how the breath of the Sphinx poisoned the pure air of the heaven and filled their dwellings with a noisome pestilence. And they said, ‘Help us, stranger, if thou canst, for if help come not soon, the city and people of Cadmos will be destroyed; for like a black cloud in the sky the Sphinx rests on the cliff, and none can drive her away unless he answer first the riddle with which she baffles the wisest of the land. Every day she utters her dark speech, and devours all who seek to answer it and fail.’ Then said OEdipus, ‘What may the riddle be?’ and they answered, ‘This much only does the Sphinx say, “On the earth is a two-footed living thing which has four feet and three and only one voice. Alone of all

creatures it changes in its form, and moves most slowly when it uses all its feet." Now, therefore, stranger, if thou canst answer the riddle, thou wilt win a mighty prize; for Laios, our king, has been slain, we know not by whom, and the elders have spoken the word that he who slays the Sphinx shall have Iocastê for his wife and sit on the throne of Cadmos.'

Then, with a cheerful heart, Oedipus went onwards, until he drew near to the cliff on which the Sphinx was sitting. With a steady gaze he looked on her stern unpitying face, and said to her, 'What is thy riddle?' and all who heard trembled as she spake to Oedipus. Then he thought within himself for a while, and at last he looked up and said, 'Listen, O Sphinx: the creature of whom thou hast asked me is man. In the days of his helpless childhood he crawls on his four feet; in his old age a staff is his third foot, and his movement is slowest when he crawls on four feet.'

The paleness of death came over the face of the Sphinx, and every limb quivered with fear, until, as Oedipus drew nearer, she flung herself with a wild roar from the cliff. Presently the men of Thebes trampled on her ghastly carcase; and they led Oedipus<sup>51</sup> in triumph to the elders of the city, shouting 'Io Pæan' for the mighty deed which he

had done. Then was the feast spread in the great banquet-hall, and the minstrels sang his praise, and besought strength and wealth for him and for the people. So Iocastê became the wife of Œdipus,<sup>52</sup> and all men said, ‘ Since the days of Cadmos, the son of Telephassa, no king hath ruled us so wisely and justly; ’ and the name of the gloomy Laïos was forgotten.

## ŒDIPUS.

FOR many years Œdipus reigned gloriously in Thebes, and the fame of his wisdom was spread abroad in the countries round about. He looked on his sons and daughters as they grew up in health and strength, filling his house with gladness and merriment; and it seemed to him as though trouble and sorrow could scarcely vex him more. But the terrible Erinnys, who takes vengeance for blood, had not forgotten the day when Laïos fell smitten by the wayside; and, at the bidding of Zeus, Phœbus Apollo sent a plague upon the Theban land. The people died like sheep in the city and the field, and the pestilence was more grievous than in the days when the Sphinx uttered her dark riddle from the cliff. At last the elders of the city came to Œdipus and said, ‘O king, thou didst save the city and the people long ago, when we were sore pressed by a horrible monster; save us now, if thou canst, by thy great wisdom.’ But Œdipus said, ‘Friends, the plague which is slaying us now comes from no

monster, but from Zeus who dwells on Olympus ; and my wisdom therefore cannot avail to take it away. But I have sent Creon my brother to the shrine of Phœbus Apollo at Delphi to ask him wherefore these evils have come upon us.'

But the coming of Creon brought strife only and anguish to the city, and the fearful Erinnys who wanders through the air waved her dark wings over the house of Œdipus; for Phœbus had told him that there was no hope for the land until they cast forth the man whose hands were polluted with blood. Then said Œdipus, 'This were an easy task if we only knew on whom lies the bloodguiltiness,<sup>53</sup> but I know neither the man nor the deed for which this doom is laid upon him.' And Creon answered, 'O king, it is for Laios, who was slain as he was journeying into the Phokian land.'

Then everywhere through the city and in the field went the messengers of Œdipus, charging all to bring forth the murderer, and threatening grievous pains to any who should hide or shelter him. But none stood forth to own his guilt or to charge it on another ; and in his sore strait Œdipus sent for the blind seer Teiresias, who knew the speech of birds and the hidden things of earth and heaven. But when he was led before

the king, Œdipus saw that the heart of the wise prophet was troubled, and he said gently, ‘Teiresias, thou understandest things that are hidden from other men; tell me now, I beseech thee, on whose hands is the stain from the blood of Laios. Let me but know this, and the pestilence will straightway cease from the land.’ But Teiresias answered hastily, ‘Ask me not, O king, ask me not. Let me go again to my home, and let us bear each his own burden.’ So Teiresias kept silence, and many times Œdipus prayed him to speak, until his wrath was roused, and he spake unseemly words to the prophet, and said, ‘If thou answerest not my question, it must be because thine own hands are polluted with the blood of Laios.’ Then from the countenance of the prophet flashed unutterable scorn, as he said slowly, so that none might hear but Œdipus, ‘O king, thou hast sealed thine own doom. On thine hand lies his blood, not on mine; and thou rememberest the words which Phoebus spake to thee at Delphi, when thou hadst gone thither from the house of Polybos.’ But, in his rage and madness, Œdipus took no heed of prudence and wisdom, and he cried with a loud voice, and said, ‘Hearken, O people, to the words of Teiresias; hath he not spoken well when he said that Laios was smitten

by my hand ?' Then there rose wild cries and shoutings, and bitter words were spoken against the seer, who had dared to revile the king ; but as he turned to go, Teiresias said only, ' It is easy to cry aloud, it is harder to judge and to find out the truth ; search ye it out well before ye say that I have spoken falsely.'

So once more a terrible doubt filled the mind of Œdipus. In the day his thoughts vexed him, and evil dreams stood before him in the dark hours of night ; and daily the plague pressed more heavily on the people, until at length he asked Iocastē of the time when Laïos had been slain, and what tidings were brought of the deed. And she said, ' One only lives to tell the tale, and he said that, at a place where three ways met, robbers fell on the king and slew him ; and the deed was done not long before thy coming to Thebes.' Then a strange fear came over Œdipus, as he remembered the old man whom he had smitten in his chariot, and he told her of all the things which befell him as he journeyed to Thebes from Delphi. ' But in thy words is hope,' he said, ' for if Laïos fell by a band of thieves, then am I guiltless of his blood. Yet hasten now, and bring hither the man who saw the deed, for I will not close my eyes in sleep until this secret is made known.'

But while one went for the man, there came a messenger from Corinth with tidings that Polybos the king was dead ; and Œdipus lifted up his hands and said, ‘I thank thee, O Zeus ; for the words of Phœbus Apollo, that I should slay my father, can never be accomplished.’ But the messenger answered hastily, ‘Thy thanks are wasted, O king, for the blood of Polybos runs not in thy veins. I found thee on the rugged heights of Kithairôn, and saved thee from the doom which was prepared for thee. So from the house of Polybos there is for thee neither hope nor fear.’ Then the heart of Œdipus beat wildly with a horrible dread, and he said, ‘O thou that dwellest at Delphi, have thy words in very deed been accomplished, and I knew it not ?’ Presently the hope, which the words of Iocastê had waked up in him, was taken away ; for the old man who had seen the deed said now that one only had slain the king, and the tokens remained sure that the hands of Œdipus were polluted with his father’s blood.

Then was there woe unspeakable in the city of Cadmos, and the hearts of all the people were bowed down with grief for all the miseries which had burst like a flood on the house of Labdacos, and a great cry went up to heaven. For the lady Iocastê lay dead, and Œdipus had done a fearful

deed when he saw her stretched cold and lifeless before him. With his own hands he tore out his eyes and hurled them away; for he said, ‘It is not fit that the eyes which have seen such things should ever look upon the sun again.’

From that day forth the terrible Erinnys who hovers in the air, and the awful Atē<sup>54</sup> who visits the sins of the fathers upon the children, abode by day and by night in the house of Œdipus. His sons strove together in their vain and silly pride, and each sought to be king in his father’s place, till at last they cast Œdipus forth, and he wandered in wretchedness and misery from the land of the Cadmeians. His grievous sorrow had quenched his love for his people, and he said, in bitterness of spirit, that his body should not be buried in the Theban land. So his child Antigônê led him onwards, and sought to cheer him in his fierce agony. But the dark cloud rested ever on his countenance, until, one day, he said to Antigônê, ‘My child, I think that the end of my long suffering is nigh at hand; for there came to me last night a vision of a dream which said, “Man of many troubles, thou shalt lie down to rest in the grove of the Eumenides, and for the land in which thy body shall lie there shall be wealth in peace and victory in war.”’ So he went

on with a good heart, journeying towards rocky Athens, and as he passed through a wood where the waters of a little stream murmured pleasantly in the still summer air, he sat down on a seat carved in the living rock, while Antigone stood by his side. But presently a rough voice bade him rise and depart. ‘Stranger, dost thou not dread the wrath of the mighty beings whose very name we fear to utter? In this grove of the Eumenides no mortal man may rest or tarry.’ But Oedipus said gently, ‘Yet move me not, I pray thee, for I am not as other men, and the visions of Zeus have told me that this shall be the place of my rest. Go then to Theseus who rules at Athens, and bid him come to one who has suffered much and who will do great things for him and for his people.’ So Theseus came at the bidding of Oedipus; and there were signs in the heaven above and on the earth beneath, that the end was nigh at hand, for the ground shook beneath their feet, and the thunder was heard in the cloudless sky. Then Oedipus bade Antigone farewell, and said, ‘Weep not, my child; I am going to my home, and I rejoice to lay down the burden of my woe.’ And to Theseus he said, ‘Follow me, O friend, for the blind shall guide thee this day. The dreams which Zeus sends have shown me the place where

I must sleep after the fever of my life is ended; and so long as thou revealest not my resting-place to men, thou and thy people shall prosper and wax mighty in peace and in war.' But even while he yet spake, there came a voice which said, 'Œdipus, why tarriest thou?' and the sound of the thunder echoed again through the cloudless sky. Then he spake the parting words to Theseus, and besought him to guard his child Antigonê; and he said, 'Here must thou stay until thou seest that the things are accomplished of which the vision hath forewarned me. Follow me not further.' So Œdipus departed alone, and Theseus knew presently that Zeus had fulfilled his word.<sup>55</sup>

From that day forth, the city of Athénê grew mighty in the earth, and no enemy prevailed against it. For to no one did Theseus show the place where Œdipus rested in the hidden dells of Colonos, save to the man who should rule at Athens after him. Thus only the king knew where lay the secret spell which made the city of Erechtheus mightier than the city of Cadmos; and the men of Thebes sought in vain to find the grave of Œdipus where the Kephisos flows by the sacred grove of the Eumenides.

## POLYNEIKES.

THERE was strife between Eteocles and Polyneikes, when they had driven forth their father from the city of Cadmos; for Oedipus had laid on them a heavy curse for their cruel deed, and the awful Erinnys heard it, and she sware with an oath that there should be no peace for the men of Thebes until the whole house of Laïos should be utterly destroyed. At first the brothers agreed that each should be king in his turn, and that the power should pass daily from the one to the other; but soon there grew up jealousy between them and hatred, and bitter words were spoken, until at last Eteocles rose up against his brother and thrust him out of the city.

So Polyneikes went away in rage and sorrow, and took the road which goes to Argos; and as he came near to it, he met a stranger by the wayside, and they talked together, until there arose a quarrel between them. But while they were fighting, Adrastos the king passed by, and he saw that

on the shield of Polyneikes was a boar, and a lion on the shield of the other stranger, whose name was Tydeus; and he said within himself, ‘Long ago Phœbus forewarned me that my daughters must be married to a lion and a boar; surely these must be they of whom he spake.’ And he went up to them and parted them in their battle, and said, ‘Come with me, friends. I am Adrastos, and I rule in this city of Argos. There are better things in store for you than vain strife and hard blows.’ So, when Argeia became the wife of Polyneikes, and Dêipylê was given to Tydeus, who came from the rugged mountains of *Aetolia*, Adrastos sware to avenge the wrongs of both the strangers and to place them again on the thrones of their fathers.

Then throughout the land of Argos the messengers went to and fro to summon the chieftains to the war; but when they met in council at Argos, Amphiaraos rose up and said, ‘Friends, ye are going to your death, for to me are shown many things which are hidden from your eyes; and I see the eagles gathered which shall tear the flesh from your bones, if ye go against the city and people of Cadmos.’ But none hearkened to his warnings, and they dragged Amphiaraos to the war against his will.

So round the walls of Thebes camped the army of the great Argive chieftains; and within the city was fear and trembling, until Teiresias the wise seer spake and said, ‘Thebans, the victory shall be yours, and your enemies shall perish utterly, if ye offer a great sacrifice to Ares.’ Then Menekeus, the son of Creon, answered, ‘What can a man give better than his life?’ and he went forth and slew himself without the city.<sup>56</sup> Then the Argives battered more fiercely against the gates, and put ladders to climb the walls; but the thunderbolt fell from heaven, and smote many of them, and the Thebans hurled mighty stones from the wall, and crushed the foremost of their warriors. Still the battle raged fiercely, until Eteocles went forth and said, ‘Men of Argos, ye are fighting in a vain quarrel; for ye have no cause to hate the men of Thebes. Bring forth Polyneikes my brother, that we may fight together, and so shall the strife be ended, and ye shall go back to your homes in peace.’

Then the awful Erinnys, as she hovered unseen in the air, waved her dark wings over the brothers when they came forth to meet each other. On their faces was the blackness of hatred strong as death; but no word was spoken as they drew

each his sword, and the mortal strife began. Then the Erinnys gave to their arms an unearthly strength, and presently the bodies of the two brothers were stretched dead upon the plain. But the men of Argos and of Thebes said that there was no victory where none lived to claim it, and again they fought, until Tydeus the Ætolian fell with a deadly wound, and a mighty crowd of enemies pressed hard to slay Amphiaraos. Then he rose up in his chariot, and, lifting up his hands to the broad heaven, he said, ‘O Zeus, the hour is come; and the things of which thou didst show me the tokens have been accomplished. Yet save me from the sword of men, if the doom is that I must die.’ So his prayer was heard, and the earth clave asunder, and the chariot of Amphiaraos was seen no more; and the place where it sank down became holy ground, for the flocks and herds would not touch the grass which grew soft and green upon it,<sup>57</sup> and the birds lighted not near the pillars of his temple.

Then a mighty terror fell on the men of Argos, when they knew that Amphiaraos had been taken from the land of living men; and the chieftains fled away each to his own home. With the swiftness of the wind as it sweeps over the waters,

Adrastos rode on his horse Areiôn, over hill and vale and along the sea-shore; and as they saw his blood-stained raiment streaming on the breeze, the people of the land knew that Zeus had accomplished the doom of the chiefs who went to place Polyneikes on the throne of his father Œdipus.

## ANTIGONÉ.

WHEN the army of the Argives was scattered and the two sons of Œdipus had slain each other, Creon became king in Thebes, and he sent messengers through the city, who said, ‘Hearken, ye people, to the words of the king. Eteocles has fallen in a righteous quarrel, and a great sacrifice shall be done to the gods who dwell beneath the earth, that they may welcome him when he comes before them: but the body of Polyneikes shall be cast forth to the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air; and the man who dares to lay it in the ground, or so much as to sprinkle earth upon it, shall be stoned to death before the people of the city.’

So the body of Polyneikes was cast forth on a mound of earth, and guards were placed there to see that none should bury it or sprinkle earth upon it. But Antigoné spake to Isménê, her sister, and besought her help that the fitting things might be done for the body of their brother; but Isménê said, ‘What good can come

from despising the words of those who rule in the city? Hath anything prospered in the house of Laios since the plague came to search out the pollution of blood? and how shall it profit to bring another woe on the woes that are past?' And Antigonê answered, 'Be it even as thou wilt, my sister; thou knowest, it may be, what it is best for thee to do. I speak not for any love which Polyneikes showed to us or to our father; but there are other laws besides the laws of gentleness and pity; and justice, which lives for ever, cries out that the offerings must be given for those who wander on the banks of the Stygian stream.'<sup>58</sup>

So the maiden went forth, and when the shades of night covered the earth, she scraped away the sand until the body of Polyneikes sank down into the shallow grave. But the men who were placed to guard the body woke up from their sleep, and seized the maiden, and carried her in the morning before the king. And Creon said, 'Thou hast sealed thine own doom, Antigonê, for the word which I have spoken may not be recalled, and this day thou shalt die.' But the maiden answered, 'Do with me as thou wilt; I have obeyed a law which is higher and stronger than thy word.' So they carried the maiden to a

hollow rock, and there they placed her with a loaf of bread and a flask of water.

But dark signs were seen again in the heavens, and the seer Teiresias came before Creon, and said,<sup>59</sup> ‘Take good heed, O king, what thou doest. The wrath of the awful Erinnys is coming again upon the city, and few hours shall pass before thou shalt atone with the life of one whom thou dost love for the death of the maiden Antigonê. I have heard the strange voices of birds, which told me of fresh woes for this hapless land; and I have listened to the sounds which tell of strife and war. The fire burns not on the altar of sacrifice, and the flesh of the victim wastes away in the smouldering cinders; for the gods who dwell beneath the earth are wroth with thee, and thou hast done to them a grievous wrong while thy thought was how thou mightest do hurt to Polyneikes.’ Then Creon said, ‘The evil may be yet undone. The traitor’s body shall be buried, and we will bring forth Antigonê from the cave where they have left her to die.’

Hastily and in much fear they went to save the maiden; but when they entered the cave, the body of Antigonê lay before them stiff and cold in death, and by her side sat Hæmon, the son of

the king ; but when Creon bade him rise and go home, he said, ‘ It is too late ; the joy of my life is gone ; what have I to live for now ? ’ Then he plunged a dagger into his heart, and in the home of Hades and Persephonê he won again the love which Creon had denied to him in the land of living men.

So the years went on, but the days of Creon passed in gloom and sorrow, for the light which had risen for a little while on the house of Laios was quenched at the death of Haemon ; and there came rumours of war from Argos, for the sons of the chieftains who had fought for Polyneikes were grown up to manhood, and they had vowed a vow to avenge the blood of their fathers. Once more Creon sent for the blind prophet ; but Teiresias would not come, for he said, ‘ There is no hope, and the undying gods fight against the children of Cadmos.’ So the hearts of the Thebans were bowed down with fear, and Creon fled away in terror when the army of the Argives drew nigh to the walls of the city. Thus was the house of Laios rooted utterly out of the land, and the vengeance of the awful Erinnys was accomplished.

## ERIPHYLÉ.

WHEN the first war of the seven chiefs against Thebes was ended, the men of Argos, with the help of the men of Athens, took from the Thebans the dead bodies of their comrades and burnt them with fire, and then went back to their own land. But the words of Amphiaraos were yet to be accomplished, which he spake to Alcmaeon his son when he departed for the war.

Now the wisdom of the far-seeing gods had rested on Amphiaraos, for he was sprung from the seer Melampus, who knew the speech of birds. And thus it was that, when Adrastos besought his aid against the men of Thebes, Amphiaraos forewarned him of the evils which should come upon them. ‘The Atē of Zeus presses sore upon Polyneikes,’ he said, ‘for the curse of a father has a mighty power. Wherefore I go not to the war.’ Then was there great fear, and the chieftains took counsel hurriedly in the hall of Adrastos, for of all the warriors of the land none had so great fame as the wise seer Amphiaraos. His spear had

wounded the great boar of Calydon, which was slain by the beautiful Atalantê, and his wisdom had guided the chiefs who sailed in the ship Argo to fetch away the golden fleece. But Amphiaraos dwelt with his wife Eriphylê, and in an evil hour he had sworn to Adrastos her brother that, if ever there rose up strife between them, he would follow the bidding of Eriphylê. So the chieftain of Argos went to his sister, and said, ‘Our task is vain, if Amphiaraos goes not forth with us to the war. Wherefore I have brought thee a rich gift, that thou mayest persuade him to go. Lo ! here is the necklace which Hephaistos wrought and Cadmos gave to his wife Harmonia when he had come to Thebes from the far-off Eastern land.’ The lustre of gold and gems dazzled the eyes of Eriphylê, and her heart was corrupted by the bribe, so that she said, ‘Fear not, my brother. It shall be even as thou wilt.’ So her word was spoken, and Amphiaraos bade farewell to his home and to his children ; but to Alcmaeon his eldest-born he said, ‘The treachery of thy mother sends me forth to an evil war ; if I come not back, avenge me of her.’

Then Alcmaeon remembered his father’s words when the remnant of the host of the Argives returned faint of heart from the seven-gated walls

of Thebes, and when they told him how Zeus had opened the earth and taken to himself his child Amphiaraos. So Eriphylé died, and the awful Erinnys, who hovers in the air, came down to take vengeance for the deed. Unheard by others, the waving of her dark wings and the hiss of her poisoned breath fell loud and harsh on the ear of Alcmæon, and gave him neither peace by day nor sleep by night. In madness of spirit he wandered through the land, driven by her merciless scourge, till he came to the shrine of Phœbus Apollo at Delphi. There the priestess bade him offer the necklace which Adrastos gave to Eriphylé, and told him that, if he would have rest from the scourge of Erinnys, he must find a spot which the sun had not yet seen when he avenged his father. In sorrow of heart Alcmæon wandered from Delphi, over mountain and through valley, seeking in vain for the place of which the priestess had spoken, until he came to the shores of the mighty Ache-lôos, where it flows slowly out into the sea. There the slime, borne down by the waters, rises higher and higher as the years roll round, and makes new land, gaping and desolate, where the lank and coarse grass sweeps in a wild tangle over the ground. Here, as he sank down in utter weariness, Alcmæon heard a voice which said,

‘ This is the place of thy rest, for here the blood which thou hast shed cannot taint the air ; and here, when ten years have passed away, thy hands shall again be pure, and thou shalt return and lead thy kinsfolk to avenge the blood of their fathers against the men of Thebes.’<sup>60</sup>

Even so it came to pass ; and when the Epigoni<sup>61</sup> made ready for the war, Alcmæon went forth from his hiding-place, and led them from Argos against the city of Cadmos. But the undying gods cared no more to shield Creon, and all things came to pass according to the words of the seer Teiresias, and the chiefs of Argos burst through the seven gates and smote the men of Thebes, and made Thersander, the son of Polyneikes, king in the stead of Creon, the son of Menœkeus.

## ACHILLEUS.

NINE years the Achaians had fought against Ilion to avenge the wrongs and the woes of Helen, and still the war went on, and only the words of Calchas, which he spake long ago in Aulis,<sup>62</sup> cheered them with the hope that the day of vengeance was near at hand. For strife had arisen between the king Agamemnon and the mighty son of Peleus, and it seemed to the men of Argos that all their toil must be for naught. In fierce anger, Achilleus vowed a vow that he would go forth no more to the battle, and he sat in sullen silence within his tent, or wandered gloomily along the sea-shore. With fresh courage the hosts of the Trojans poured out from their walls when they knew that Achilleus fought no more on the side of the Achaians, and the chieftains sought in vain for his help when the battle went against them. Then the face of the war was changed; for the men of Ilion came forth from their city, and shut up the Achaians within their camp, and fought fiercely to take

the ships. Many a chief and warrior was smitten down, and still Achilleus sat within his tent, nursing his great wrath, and reviling all who came before him with gifts and prayers.

But dearer than all others to the child of the sea-nymph Thetis was Patroclos, the son of Menoetios, and the heart of Achilleus was touched with pity when he saw the tears stream down his face ; and he said, ‘ Dear friend, tell me thy grief, and hide nothing from me. Hast thou evil tidings from our home at Phthia, or weepest thou for the troubles which vex us here ? ’ Then Patroclos spake out boldly, and said, ‘ Be not angry at my words, Achilleus. The strength of the Argives is wasted away, and the mightiest of their chieftains lie wounded or dead around their ships. They call thee the child of Peleus and of Thetis ; but men will say that thou art sprung from the rugged rocks and the barren sea, if thou seest thy people undone and liftest not an arm to help them.’ Then Achilleus answered, ‘ O friend, the vow is on me, and I cannot go ; but put thou on my armour, and go forth to the battle. Only take heed to my words, and go not in my chariot against the city of Ilion. Drive our enemies from the ships, and let them fight in the plain, and then do thou come back to my tent.’

Then the hearts of the Achaians were cheered, for next to Achilleus there was not in all the host a warrior more brave and mighty than Patroclos. At his word, the Myrmidons started up from their long rest, and hastily snatched their arms to follow him to the battle. Presently Patroclos came forth. The glistening helmet of Achilleus was on his head, and his armour was girt around his body. Only he bare not his mighty spear, for no mortal man might wield that spear in battle but Achilleus. Before the tent stood the chariot, and harnessed to it were the horses Xanthos and Balios, who grow not old nor die.<sup>63</sup>

So Patroclos departed for the fight, and Achilleus went into his tent, and as he poured out the dark wine from a golden goblet, he prayed to Zeus, and said, ‘O thou that dwellest far away in Dodona,<sup>64</sup> where the Selloi do thy bidding and proclaim thy will, give strength and victory to Patroclos my friend. Let him drive the men of Ilion from the ships and come back safe to me after the battle.’ But Zeus heard the prayer in part only, for the doom was that Achilleus should see Patroclos alive no more.

Then the hosts of the Trojans trembled as Patroclos drew nigh on the chariot of Achilleus, and none dared to go forth against him. Onwards

sped the undying horses, and wherever they went the ground was red with the blood of the Trojans who were smitten down by his spear. Then Sarpedon,<sup>65</sup> the great chief of the Lykians, spake to Glaucos, and said, ‘O friend, I must go forth and do battle with Patroclos. The people fall beneath his sword, and it is not fit that the chieftains should be backward in the strife.’ But the doom of Sarpedon was sealed, and presently his body lay lifeless on the ground, while the men of Argos and of Ilion fought for his glittering arms.

Then the doom came on Patroclos also, for Phœbus Apollo fought against him in the battle, and in the dust was rolled the helmet which no enemy had touched when it rested on the head of Achilleus. Before him flashed the spear of Hector, as he said, ‘The hour of thy death is come, Patroclos, and the aid of Achilleus cannot reach thee now.’ But Patroclos said only, ‘It is thy time for boasting now; wait yet a little while, and the sword of Achilleus shall drink thy life-blood.’

So Patroclos died, and there was a fierce fight over his body, and many fell on both sides, until there was a great heap of dead around it. But away from the fight, the horses Xanthos and Balios wept for their charioteer, and they would

not stir with the chariot, but stood fixed firm as pillars on the ground, till Zeus looked down in pity on them and said, ‘Was it for this that I gave you to Peleus, the chieftain of Phthia—horses who cannot grow old or die, to a mortal man, the most wretched thing that crawls upon the earth? But fear not; no enemy shall lay hands on the chariot of Achilleus, or on the immortal horses which bear it. Your limbs shall be filled with new strength, and ye shall fly like birds across the battle-field till ye come to the tent of your master.’ Then the horses wept no more, but swift as eagles they bare Automedon through the fight,<sup>66</sup> while Hector and his people strove fiercely to seize them. At last the battle was over, and, while the Achaians bore the body of Patroclos to the ships, Antilochos, the son of Nestor, went to the tent of Achilleus, and said, ‘Thy friend is slain, and Hector has his armour.’

Then the dark cloud of woe fell on the soul of Achilleus. In a fierce grief he threw earth with both hands into the air, and rent his clothes, and lay down weeping in the dust. Far away in her coral caves beneath the sea Thetis heard the deep groans of her child, and, like a white mist, she rose from the waters and went to comfort him; and she said, ‘Why weeppest thou, my son?

When Agamemnon did thee wrong, thou didst pray that the Achaians might sorely need thy aid in the battle, and thy wish has been accomplished. So may it be again.' But Achilleus answered, 'Of what profit is it to me, my mother, that my prayer has been heard, since Patroclos my friend is slain, and Hector has my armour? One thing only remains to me now. I will slay Hector, and avenge the slaughter of Patroclos.' Then the tears ran down the cheeks of Thetis as she said, 'Then is thine own doom accomplished, for when thou slayest Hector, thou hast not many days to live.' 'So then let it be,' said Achilleus; 'the mighty Heracles tasted of death: therefore let me die also, so only Hector dies before me.'<sup>67</sup>

Then Thetis sought no more to turn him from his purpose, but she went to the house of Hephaistos to get armour for her child in place of that which Hector had taken from Patroclos. And Achilleus vowed a vow that twelve sons of the Trojans should be slain at the grave of Patroclos, and that Hector should die before the funeral rites were done. Then Agamemnon sent him gifts, and spake kindly words,<sup>68</sup> so that the strife between them was ended, and Achilleus might now go forth to fight for the Achaians. So, in the armour which Hephaistos had wrought at the prayer of

Thetis, he mounted his chariot, and bade his horses bring him back safe from the battle-field. Then the horse Xanthos bowed his head, and the long tresses of his mane flowed down to the earth as he made answer, ‘We will in very truth save thee, O mighty Achilleus, but thy doom is near at hand, and the fault rests not with us now, or when we left Patroclos dead on the battle-field, for Phœbus Apollo slew him and gave the glory and the arms to Hector.’ And Achilleus said, ‘Why speak to me of evil omens? I know that I shall see my father and my mother again no more; but if I must die in a strange land, I will first take my fill of vengeance.’<sup>69</sup>

Then the war-cry of Achilleus was heard again, and a mighty life was poured into the hearts of the Achaians, as they seized their arms at the sound. Thick as withering leaves in autumn fell the Trojans beneath his unerring spear. Chief after chief was smitten down, until their hosts fled in terror within the walls of Ilion. Only Hector awaited his coming; but the shadow of death was stealing over him, for Phœbus Apollo had forsaken the great champion of Troy because Zeus so willed it. So in the strife the strength of Hector failed, and he sank down on the earth. The foot of Achilleus rested on his breast, and the spear’s point was on his neck, while Hector

said, ‘Slay me if thou wilt, but give back my body to my people. Let not the beasts of the field devour it, and rich gifts shall be thine from my father and my mother for this kindly deed.’ But the eyes of Achilleus flashed with a deadly hatred as he answered, ‘Were Priam to give me thy weight in gold, it should not save thy carcase from the birds and dogs.’ And Hector said, ‘I thought not to persuade thee, for thy heart is made of iron ; but see that thou pay not the penalty for thy deed, on the day when Paris and Phœbus Apollo shall slay thee at the Skaian gates of Ilion.’ Then the life-blood of Hector reddened the ground as Achilleus said, ‘Die, wretch ! My fate I will meet in the hour when it may please the undying gods to send it.’

But not yet was the vengeance of Achilleus accomplished. At his feet lay Hector dead, but the rage in his heart was fierce as ever; and he tied the body to his chariot and dragged it furiously, till none who looked on it could say, ‘This was the brave and noble Hector.’ But things more fearful still came afterwards, for the funeral rites were done for Patrocllos, and twelve sons of the Trojans were slain in the mighty sacrifice. Still the body of Hector lay on the ground, and the men of Ilion sought in vain to redeem it from Achilleus. But Phœbus Apollo

came down to guard it, and he spread over it his golden shield to keep away all unseemly things.<sup>70</sup> And at the last king Priam mounted his chariot, for he said, ‘Surely he will not scorn the prayer of a father when he begs the body of his son.’ Then Zeus sent Hermes to guide the old man to the tent of Achilleus, so that none others of the Danai might see him. Then he stood before the man who had slain his son, and he kissed his hands and said, ‘Hear my prayer, Achilleus. Thy father is an old man like me, but he hopes one day to see thee come back with great glory from Ilion. My sons are dead, and none had braver sons in Troy than I; and Hector, the flower and pride of all, has been smitten by thy spear. Fear the gods, Achilleus, and pity me for the remembrance of thy father, for none has ever dared like me to kiss the hand of the man who has slain his son.’ So Priam wept for his dear child Hector, and the tears flowed down the cheeks of Achilleus as he thought of his father Peleus and his friend Patroclos, and the cry of their mourning went up together.<sup>71</sup>

So the body of Hector was borne back to Ilion, and a great sacrifice was done to the gods beneath the earth, that Hector might be welcomed in the kingdom of Hades and Persephonē. But the

time drew nigh that the doom of Achilleus must be accomplished, and the spear of Phœbus Apollo<sup>72</sup> pierced his heart as they fought near the Skaian gates of Ilion. In the dust lay the body of Achilleus, while the Achaians fought the whole day long around it, till a mighty storm burst forth from the heaven.<sup>73</sup> Then they carried it away to the ships, and placed it on a couch, and washed it in pure water. And once more from her coral caves beneath the sea rose the silver-footed

hetis, and the cry of the nymphs who followed her filled the air, so that the Achaians who heard it trembled and would have fled to the ships; but Nestor, the wise chief of the Pylians, said, ‘Flee not, ye Argives, from those who come to mourn for the dead Achilleus.’ So Thetis stood weeping by the body of her child, and the nymphs wrapped it in shining robes. Many days and nights they wept and watched around it, until at last they raised a great pile of wood on the sea-shore, and the flame went up to heaven. Then they gathered up the ashes, and placed them, with the ashes of Patroclos, in a golden urn which Hephaistos wrought and gave to Dionysos; and over it they raised a great cairn on the shore of the sea of Hellē, that men might see it afar off as they sailed on the broad waters.<sup>74</sup>

## IXION.

FAIR as the blushing clouds which float in early morning across the blue heaven, the beautiful Dia gladdened the hearts of all who dwelt in the house of her father Hesioneus. There was no guile in her soft clear eye, for the light of Eôs was not more pure than the light of the maiden's countenance. There was no craft in her smile, for on her rested the love and the wisdom of Athénê. Many a chieftain sought to win her for his bride, but her heart beat with love only for Ixion the beautiful and mighty, who came to the halls of Hesioneus with horses which cannot grow old or die.<sup>75</sup> The golden hair flashed a glory from his head dazzling as the rays which stream from Helios when he drives his chariot up the heights of heaven; and his flowing robe glistened as he moved, like the vesture which the sun-god gave to the wise maiden Medeia who dwelt in Colchis.

Long time Ixion abode in the house of Hesio-

neus, for Hesioneus was loth to part with his child. But at the last Ixion sware to give for her a ransom precious as the golden fruits which Helios wins from the teeming earth. So the word was spoken, and Dia the fair became the wife of the son of Amythaon, and the undying horses bare her away in his gleaming chariot. Many a day and month and year the fiery steeds of Helios sped on their burning path, and sank down hot and wearied in the western sea; but no gifts came from Ixion,<sup>76</sup> and Hesioneus waited in vain for the wealth which had tempted him to barter away his child. Messenger after messenger went and came, and always the tidings were that Ixion had better things to do than waste his wealth on the mean and greedy. ‘Tell him,’ he said, ‘that every day I journey across the wide earth, gladdening the hearts of the children of men, and that his child has now a more glorious home than that of the mighty gods who dwell on the high Olympus. What would he have more?’ Then day by day Hesioneus held converse with himself, and his people heard the words which came sadly from his lips. ‘What would I more?’ he said; ‘I would have the love of my child. I let her depart, when not the wealth of Phœbus himself could recompense me for her loss. I bartered her for

gifts, and Ixion withholds the wealth which he sware to give. Yet were all the riches of his treasure-house lying now before me, one loving glance from the eyes of Dia would be more than worth them all.'

But when his messengers went yet again to plead with Ixion, and their words were all spoken in vain, Hesioneus resolved to deal craftily, and he sent his servants by night and stole the undying horses which bare his gleaming chariot. Then the heart of Ixion was humbled within him, for he said, ' My people look for me daily throughout the wide earth. If they see not my face, their souls will faint with fear; they will not care to sow their fields, and the golden harvests of Dé-mêtér will wave no more in the summer breeze.' So there came messengers from Ixion, who said, ' If thou wouldest have the wealth which thou seekest, come to the house of Ixion, and the gifts shall be thine, and thine eyes shall once more look upon thy child.' In haste Hesioneus went forth from his home, as the dark and lonely cloud steals across the broad heaven. All night long he sped upon his way, and, as the light of Eôs flushed the eastern sky, he saw afar off the form of a fair woman who beckoned to him with her long white arms. Then the heart of the old man revived,

and he said, ‘It is Dia, my child. It is enough if I can but hear her voice and clasp her in mine arms and die.’ But his limbs trembled for joy, and he waited until presently his daughter came and stood beside him. On her face there rested a softer beauty than in the former days, and the sound of her voice was more tender and loving, as she said, ‘My father, Zeus has made clear to me many dark things, for he has given me power to search out the secret treasures of the earth, and to learn from the wise beings who lurk in its hidden places the things that shall be hereafter. And now I see that thy life is wellnigh done, if thou seekest to look upon the treasures of Ixion, for no man may gaze upon them and live. Go back then to thy home, if thou wouldest not die. I would that I might come with thee, but so it may not be. Each day I must welcome Ixion when his fiery horses come back from their long journey, and every morning I must harness them to his gleaming chariot before he speeds upon his way. Yet thou hast seen my face, and thou knowest that I love thee now even as in the days of my childhood.’ But the old greed filled again the heart of Hesioneus, and he said, ‘The faith of Ixion is pledged. If he withhold still the treasures which he sware to give, he shall never more

see the deathless horses. I will go myself into his treasure-house, and see whether in very truth he has the wealth of which he makes such proud boasting.' Then Dia clasped her arms once again around her father, and she kissed his face, and said sadly, 'Farewell, then, my father; I go to my home, for even the eyes of Dia may not gaze on the secret treasures of Ixion.' So Dia left him, and when the old man turned to look on her departing form, it faded from his sight as the clouds melt away before the sun at noonday. Yet once again he toiled on his way, until before his glorious home he saw Ixion, radiant as Phœbus Apollo in his beauty; but there was anger in his kindling eye, for he was wroth for the theft of his undying horses. Then the voice of Ixion smote the ear of Hesioneus, harsh as the flapping of the wings of Erinnys when she wanders through the air. 'So thou wilt see my secret treasures. Beware that thy sight is strong.' But Hesioneus spake in haste and said, 'Thy faith is pledged, not only to let me see them, but to bestow them on me as my own, for therefore didst thou win Dia my child to be thy wife.' Then Ixion opened the door of his treasure-house, and thrust in Hesioneus, and the everlasting fire devoured him.

But far above, in the pure heaven, Zeus beheld

the deed of Ixion, and the tidings were sent abroad to all the gods of Olympus, and to all the sons of men, that Ixion had slain Hesioneus by craft and guile. A horror of great blackness fell on the heaven above and the earth beneath for the sin of which Zeus alone can purge away the guilt. Once more Dia made ready her husband's chariot, and once more he sped on his fiery journey; but all men turned away their faces, and the trees bowed their scorched and withered heads to the ground. The flowers drooped sick on their stalks and died, the corn was kindled like dried stubble on the earth, and Ixion said within himself, 'My sin is great; men will not look upon my face as in the old time, and the gods of Olympus will not cleanse my hands from the guilt of my treacherous deed.' So he went straightway and fell down humbled before the throne of Zeus, and said, 'O thou that dwellest in the pure air far above the dark cloud, my hands are foul with blood, and thou alone canst cleanse them: therefore purge mine iniquity, lest all living things die throughout the wide earth.' Then the undying gods were summoned to the judgment-seat of Zeus. By the side of the son of Cronos stood Hermes, ever bright and fair, the messenger who flies on his golden sandals more swiftly than a

dream ; but fairer and more glorious than all who stood near his throne was the lady Hérê, the queen of the blue heaven. On her brow rested the majesty of Zeus, and the glory of a boundless love which sheds gladness on the teeming earth and the broad sea. And even as he stood before the judgment-seat, the eyes of Ixion rested with a strange yearning on her undying beauty, and he scarce heard the words which cleansed him from blood-guiltiness.

So Ixion tarried in the house of Zeus, far above in the pure æther, where only the light clouds weave a fairy network at the rising and the setting of the sun. Day by day his glance rested more warm and loving on the countenance of the lady Hérê, and Zeus saw that her heart too was kindled by a strange love, and a fierce wrath was stirred within him.

Presently he called Hermes the messenger and said, ‘Bring up from among the children of Nephelê one who shall wear the semblance of the lady Hérê, and place her in the path of Ixion when he wanders forth on the morrow.’ So Hermes sped away on his errand, and on that day Ixion spake secretly with Hérê, and tempted her to fly from the house of Zeus. ‘Come with me,’ he said ; ‘the winds of heaven cannot vie in speed

with my deathless horses ; and the palace of Zeus  
is but as the house of the dead by the side of my  
glorious home.' Then the heart of Ixion bounded  
with a mighty delight as he heard the words of  
Hérê. 'To-morrow I will meet thee in the land of  
the children of Nephéle.' So on the morrow, when  
the light clouds had spread their fairy network over  
the heaven, Ixion stole away from the house of Zeus  
to meet the lady Hérê. As he went, the fairy  
web faded from the sky, and it seemed to him that  
the lady Hérê stood before him in all her beauty.  
'Hérê, great queen of the unstained heaven,' he  
said, 'come with me, for I am worthy of thy love,  
and I quail not for all the awful majesty of Zeus.'  
But even as he stretched forth his arms, the bright  
form vanished away. The crashing thunder rolled  
through the sky, and he heard the voice of Zeus  
saying, 'I cleansed thee from thy guilt ; I shel-  
tered thee in my home ; and thou hast dealt with  
me treacherously as thou didst before with Hesio-  
neus. Thou hast sought the love of Hérê, but the  
maiden which stood before thee was but a child of  
Nephelê, whom Hermes brought hither to cheat  
thee with the semblance of the wife of Zeus.  
Wherefore hear thy doom. No more shall thy  
deathless horses speed with thy glistening chariot  
over the earth, but high in the heaven a blazing

wheel shall bear thee through the rolling years;  
and the doom shall be on thee for ever and ever.'

So was Ixion bound on the fiery wheel, and the  
sons of men see the flashing spokes<sup>77</sup> day by day  
as it whirls in the high heaven.

## TANTALOS.

BENEATH the mighty rocks of Sipylos stood the palace of Tantalos the Phrygian king, gleaming with the blaze of gold and jewels. Its burnished roofs glistened from afar like the rays which dance on ruffled waters. Its marble columns flashed with hues rich as the hues of purple clouds which gather round the sun as he sinks down in the sky. And far and wide was known the name of the mighty chieftain, who was wiser than all the sons of mortal men; for his wife Euryanassa,<sup>78</sup> they said, came of the race of the undying gods, and to Tantalos Zeus had given the power of Helios, that he might know his secret counsels and see into the hidden things of the earth and air and sea. Many a time, so the people said, he held converse with Zeus himself in his home on the high Olympus; and day by day his wealth increased, his flocks and herds multiplied exceedingly, and in his fields the golden corn waved like a sunlit sea.

But, as the years rolled round, there were dark

sayings spread abroad, that the wisdom of Tantalos was turned to craft, and that his wealth and power were used for evil ends. Men said that he had sinned like Prometheus, the Titan, and had stolen from the banquet-hall of Zeus the food and drink of the gods, and given them to mortal men. And tales yet more strange were told, how that Pandareôs brought to him the hound which Rhea placed in the cave of Dictê to guard the child Zeus, and how, when Hermes bade him yield up the dog, Tantalos laughed him to scorn, and said, ‘Dost thou ask me for the hound which guarded Zeus in the days of his childhood? It were as well to ask me for the unseen breeze which sighs through the groves of Sipylos.’

Then, last of all, men spake in whispers of a sin yet more fearful which Tantalos had sinned, and the tale was told that Zeus and all the gods came down from Olympus to feast in his banquet-hall, and how, when the red wine sparkled in the golden goblets, Tantalos placed savoury meat before Zeus, and bade him eat of a costly food, and, when the feast was ended, told him that in the dish had lain the limbs of the child Pelops, whose sunny smile had gladdened the hearts of mortal men. Then came the day of vengeance, for Zeus bade Hermes bring back Pelops again from the kingdom of

Hades to the land of living men, and on Tantalos was passed a doom which should torment him for ever and ever. In the shadowy region where wander the ghosts of men, Tantalos, they said, lay prisoned in a beautiful garden, gazing on bright flowers and glistening fruits and laughing waters ; but for all that his tongue was parched, and his limbs were faint with hunger. No drop of water might cool his lips, no luscious fruit might soothe his agony. If he bowed his head to drink, the water fled away ; if he stretched forth his hand to pluck the golden apples, the branches vanished like mists before the face of the rising sun ; and in place of ripe fruits glistening among green leaves a mighty rock beetled above his head, as though it must fall and grind him to powder. Wherefore men say, when the cup of pleasure is dashed from the lips of those who would drink of it, that on them has fallen the doom of the Phrygian Tantalos.<sup>79</sup>

THE BATTLE OF THE FROGS AND THE  
MICE.<sup>80</sup>

A THIRSTY mouse, who had just escaped from a weasel, was drinking from a pool of water, when a croaking frog saw him, and said, ‘Stranger, whence hast thou come to our shore, and who is thy father? Tell me the truth, and deceive me not, for if thou deservest it, I will lead thee to my house and give thee rich and beautiful gifts. My name is Puffcheek, and I rule over the frogs who dwell in this lake, and I see that thou too art an excellent prince and a brave warrior. So make haste, and tell me to what race thou dost belong.’

Then the mouse answered him, and said, ‘Friend, why dost thou ask me of my race? It is known to all the gods, and to men, and all the birds of heaven. My name is Crumbfilcher, and I am the son of the great-hearted Breadgnawer, and my mother is Lickmill, the daughter of king Hamnibbler. I was born in a hovel, and fed on figs and nuts and on all manner of good things. But how can we be friends? We are not at all

like each other. You, frogs, live in the water; we feed on whatever is eaten by man. No dainty escapes my eye, whether it be bread, or cake, or ham, or new-made cheese, or rich dishes prepared for feasts. As to war, I have never dreaded its din, but, going straight into it, have taken my place among the foremost warriors.<sup>81</sup> Nor do I fear men, although they have large bodies; for at night I can bite a finger or nibble a heel without waking the sleeper from his pleasant slumber. But there are two things which I dread greatly—a mouse-trap and a hawk; but worse than these are the weasels, for they can catch us in our holes. What then am I to do? for I cannot eat the cabbages, radishes, and pumpkins, which furnish food to the race of frogs.'

Then Puffcheek answered with a smile, 'My friend, thou art dainty enough, but we have fine things to show on the dry land and in the marsh, for the son of Cronos has given us the power to dwell on land or in the water as it may please us. If thou wouldest see these things, it is soon done. Get on my back and hold on well, so that thou mayest reach my house with a cheerful heart.' So he turned his back to the mouse, who sprang lightly on it and put his arms round his soft neck. Much pleased he was at first to swim on the back of

Puffcheek, while the haven was near ; but when he got out into midwater he began to weep and curse his useless sorrow. He tore his hair, and drew his feet tightly round the frog's stomach. His heart beat wildly, and he wished himself well on shore, as he uttered a pitiful cry and spread out his tail on the water, moving it about like an oar. Then in the bitterness of his grief he said, ‘ Surely it was not thus that the bull carried the beautiful Europa on his back over the sea to Crete ; surely——’ But before he could say more, a snake, of which frogs and mice alike are afraid, lifted up his head straight above the water. Down dived Puffcheek, when he saw the snake, never thinking that he had left the mouse to die. The frog was safe at the bottom of the marsh, but the mouse fell on his back and screamed terribly. Many times he sank and many times he came up again, kicking hard, but there was no hope. The hair on his skin was soaked with wet and weighed him down, and with his last breath he cried, ‘ Puffcheek, thou shalt not escape for thy treachery. On the land I could have beaten thee in boxing, wrestling, or running, but thou hast beguiled me into the water, where I can do nothing. The eye of justice sees thee, and thou shalt pay a fearful penalty to the great army of the mice.’

So the Crumbfilcher died, but Lickplatter saw him as he sat on the soft bank, and, uttering a sharp cry, went to tell the mice. Then was there great wrath among them, and messengers were sent to bid all come in the morning to the house of Breadgnawer, the father of the luckless Crumbfilcher, whose body could not even be buried, because it was floating in the middle of the pond. So they came at dawn, and then Breadgnawer, rising in grief and rage, said, ‘Friends, I may be the only one whom the frogs have sorely injured, but we all live but a poor life, and I am in sad plight, for I have lost three sons. The first was slain by a hateful weasel who caught him outside his hole. The next one cruel men brought to his death by a newfangled device of wood, which they call a trap; and now my darling Puffcheek has been choked in the waters. Come and let us arm ourselves for the war and go forth to do battle.’

So they put on each his armour; and for greaves around their legs they used the beans on which they fed at night, and their breastplates they made cunningly out of the skin of a dead weasel. For spears they carried skewers, and the shell of a nut for a helmet. So they stood in battle array, and the frogs, when they heard of it, rose from the water and summoned a council in a

corner of the pond. As they wondered what might be the cause of these things, there came a messenger from the mice, who declared war against them and said, ‘Ye frogs, the mice bid you arm yourselves and come forth to the battle, for they have seen Crumbfilcher, whom your king Puffcheek drowned, floating dead on the water.’ Then the valiant frogs feared exceedingly, and blamed the deed of Puffcheek; but the king said, ‘Friends, I did not kill the mouse or see him die; of course he was drowned while he amused himself in the pond by imitating the swimming of a frog, and the wretches now bring a charge against me who am wholly guiltless. But come, let us take counsel how we may destroy these mice; and this, I think, is the best plan. Let us arm ourselves and take our stand where the bank is steepest, and when they come charging against us, let us seize their helmets and drag them down into the pond. Thus we shall drown them all and set up a trophy for our victory.’ So they put on each his armour. They covered their legs with mallow leaves, and carried radish leaves for shields, and rushes for spears, and snail-shells for helmets. So they stood in array on the high bank, brandishing their spears and shouting for the battle.

But Zeus summoned the gods to the starry

heaven, and, pointing to the hosts of the frogs and mice, mighty as the armies of the Kentauri or the giants, he asked who would aid each side as it might be hard pressed in the strife; and he said to Athéné, ‘ Daughter, thou wilt go surely to the aid of the mice, for they are always running about thy shrine, and delight in the fat and the morsels which they pick from the sacrifices.’

But Athéné said to the son of Cronos, ‘ O father, I go not to help the mice, for they have done me grievous mischief, spoiling the garlands and the lamps for the sake of the oil. Nay, I have greater cause for anger, for they have eaten out the robe which I wove from fine thread, and made holes in it; and the man who mended it charges a high price, and, worse still, I borrowed the stuff of which I wove it, and now I cannot pay it back. Yet neither will I aid the frogs, for they are not in their right senses. A little while ago, I came back tired from war, and wanting sleep, but they never let me close my eyes with their clatter, and I lay sleepless with a headache till the cock crew in the morning. But, O ye gods, let us aid neither side, lest we be wounded with their swords or spears, for they are sharp and strong even against gods; but let us take our sport by watching the strife in safety out of heaven.’<sup>82</sup>

Then the gods did as Athénê bade them, and went all into one place ; and the gnats, with their great trumpets, gave the signal for the battle, and Zeus thundered out of the sky because of the woes that were coming. Mighty were the deeds which were done on both sides, and the earth and the pond were reddened with the blood of the slain. So, as the fight went on, Crumbstealer slew Garliceater before he came to land ; and Mud-walker, seeing it, threw at him a clod of earth, and, hitting him on the forehead, almost blinded him. Then, in his fury, Crumbstealer seized a great stone, and crushed the leg of the frog, so that he fell on his back in the dust. Then Bread-gnawer wounded Puffcheek in the foot, and made him limp into the water.

But among the mice was a young hero, with whom none could be matched for boldness and strength, and whose name was Bitstealer. On the bank of the pond he stood alone, and vowed a vow to destroy the whole race of the frogs. And the vow would have been accomplished, for his might was great indeed, had not the son of Cronos pitied the frogs in their misery, and charged Pallas Athénê and Arês to drive Bitstealer from the battle. But Arês made answer and said, ‘O Zeus, neither Athénê nor Arês alone can save the

frogs from death. Let us all go and help them;<sup>83</sup> and do thou, son of Cronos, wield thy mighty weapon with which thou didst slay the Titans, and Capaneus, and Enkelados, and the wild race of the giants, for thus only can the bravest of them be slain.' So spake Arès; and Zeus hurled his scathing thunderbolts, and the lightnings flashed from the sky, and Olympus shook with the earthquake. The frogs and mice heard and trembled, but the mice ceased not yet from the battle, and strove only the more to slay their enemies, until Zeus, in his pity, sent a new army to aid the frogs.

Suddenly they came on the mice, with mailed backs and crooked claws, with limping gait, with mouths like shears, and skins like potsherds. Their backs were hard and horny, their arms were long and lean, and their eyes were in their breasts. They had eight feet and two heads, and no hands. Men call them crabs. With their mouths they bit the tails and feet and hands of the mice, and broke their spears, and great terror came on all the mice, so that they turned and fled. Thus was the battle ended, and the sun went down.<sup>84</sup>

## NOTES TO TALES.

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*Note<sup>1</sup>, page 121.*

THE ocean of Greek mythology, with its unbroken calm, has nothing to do with Thalassa, the rough and angry sea. Tales of the Gods and Heroes, note 61, p. 314.

*Note<sup>2</sup>, page 122.*

A phrase from a beautiful fragment of Archilochus, quoted in Tales from Greek Mythology, p. 107. In it we have a picture of the serene and cloudless sunset which, after the slaughter of the suitors, brings to an end the long toils of Odysseus. Introduction, p. 90.

*Note<sup>3</sup>, page 124.*

The Homeric poets mention but one Gorgon, and in their descriptions she retains no trace of beauty. It matters little whether the legends which speak of the change in her form are older than Homer or later. Both are equally true to the mythical phraseology from which all such tales were derived (Introd. p. 32.) The story which says that from her head sprang the winged horse Pegasos (another form of the Harits, *χάριτες*, or horses of Indra) is remarkable chiefly because it makes her also the mother of Chrysaor, which occurs elsewhere simply as an epithet of Apollo (with the golden sword). Hesiod, Works and Days, 769.

*Note<sup>4</sup>, page 126.*

*Χρυσόπατρος*, the child of the golden shower—a fitting name for the son of Danaë, Dahanâ, the Dawn. Introd. p. 53.

*Note<sup>5</sup>, page 127.*

The Lament of Danaë, by Simonides of Keos, exists only as a fragment. Mr. Isaac Williams has given a translation of it in his Christian Scholar, p. 181.

*Note<sup>6</sup>, page 128.*

The name Polydectes is only another form of Polydegmon; and it is under both these names that Hades steals away Persephonê (Hymn to Démêtér, 9, 17). We have not far to go for the meaning. It is but the love of the night for the evening. In Homer, Eôs ends as well as begins the day (Od. v. 390); and Danaë here represents the beautiful hues of twilight, which the darkness vainly strives to make its own. It is true that Hades wins the love of Persephonê; but Persephonê is the summer, whom the winter, another image of darkness, steals from the mourning earth, her mother. Thus the vain attempt of Polydectes to win the love of Danaë is a mere counterpart to that of Apollo when he seeks to embrace Daphnê.

*Note<sup>7</sup>, page 130.*

Mr. Kingsley, in his Heroes, introduces a strong moral element into the tale, when he says that she lost her beauty for sinning ‘a sin at which the sun hid his face.’ But Medusa cannot in any sense be either morning, day, or evening; and hence the sun could not be said to see her deeds.

*Note<sup>8</sup>, page 132.*

Not the narrow strait to which we confine the name, but the broad Hellespontos, from which the storm-tossed

mariner might see the distant cairn on the grave of Achilleus (Od. xxiv. 82). See, further, Tales from Greek Mythology, note 11, p. 112.

*Note<sup>9</sup>, page 134.*

Introduction, p. 41.

*Note<sup>10</sup>, page 135.*

The idea of age would be directly suggested whenever the evening was regarded as the lingering survivor mourning for the departed glories of the day.

*Note<sup>11</sup>, page 136.*

Introd. p. 32.

*Note<sup>12</sup>, page 139.*

This 'invisible cap' is worn by Athénē in Iliad, v. 845, and is represented on the shield of Heracles (Asp. Heracl. 222).

*Note<sup>13</sup>, page 141.*

It is scarcely necessary to refer to Mr. Kingsley's fine poem, in which he has made the episode of the Dragon as attractive as it can be made in hexameters which are really anapaestic.

*Note<sup>14</sup>, page 142.*

The idea of a weighty and solid heaven would seem to be a much later conception than that of Ouranos, Varuna, who, spread over all things, looks down on the earth which he loves. The idea of the brazen firmament found no disfavour with Greek astronomers.

*Note<sup>15</sup>, page 143.*

Introd. p. 33.

*Note<sup>16</sup>, page 145.*

Tales from Greek Mythology, note 2, p. 105.

*Note<sup>17</sup>, page 146.*

The celebrated oracle of Zeus Ammon, in the Libyan

desert. The name was then referred to the sands by which the temple was surrounded, although it was only a Greek form of the Egyptian Amoun (Herod. ii. 42).

\* *Note<sup>18</sup>, page 150.*

Dictys is made a fisherman, in the same way that Lycaon is turned into a wolf—to account for the name. The name points more probably to the root of *λαίκρυμα*, and so is connected with the idea of light as revealing the secrets of darkness. Hence the brother of Polydectes would be a fitting friend for Danaë.

*Note<sup>19</sup>, page 154.*

Achilleus, also, presides at games after his victory over Hector—the reason in both cases being the same. Introd. p. 98.

*Note<sup>20</sup>, page 156.*

The man of sorrow comes naturally to Argos, when the bright hero, the sun of the land, has departed from it.

*Note<sup>21</sup>, page 157.*

These are simply local legends, to account for certain cities and their buildings. Still the myths adhere to the old idea, for the builders come from Lykia, the land of light, which gives to Phœbus the name Lykēgenēs, and they are the Cyclopes, who sometimes forge the thunderbolts of Zeus beneath the burning mountain, and sometimes, as in the Odyssey, appear as (the mists and black clouds) the monstrous offspring of the sea-god Poseidon. Here, as elsewhere, we cannot infer from the silence of Homer that the latter is the older myth. Probably both may have come down together. Introd. p. 104.

*Note<sup>22</sup>, page 158.*

Shelley's Translation of this hymn is a marvel of power and beauty. It is also on the whole a remarkably faithful

version ; and the vein of sly humour running through the poem is admirably preserved.

The analysis of this hymn (Introd. p. 46) seems to furnish a sufficient explanation of the comic air with which certain portions of the narrative are invested. The remembrance of the old myth, although not fully retained, was by no means wholly effaced ; and under these conditions it was impossible that the result should be any other than what it is. The burlesque into which the adventures of Heracles easily pass, arose from no intention of disparaging the hero's greatness ; and Mr. Grote would appear to be mistaken when he says (Hist. of Greece, vol. i. p. 82) that the hymnographer concludes the song to Hermes 'with frankness unusual in speaking of a god.' Nor can we determine, from the mere existence of this comic element, the particular use for which these hymns were composed. Colonel Mure (Crit. Hist. Gr. Lit. vol. ii. p. 316) has little hesitation in concluding, 'from the discreditable and even ludicrous light in which the character and conduct of the deities are often exhibited in their text,' that many 'even of the earlier more genial among them' were composed, not for recitation in any religious solemnities, but 'for familiar occasions of festive conviviality, where the adventures of the popular objects of worship were made, like all other subjects, to contribute their share to the common fund of mirthful entertainment.' That they may have been so used, it is impossible to deny ; but an equally strong argument against such exclusive use might be drawn from those graver passages, even in the Hymn to Hermes, which are scarcely surpassed for beauty and dignity even in the Lay of Démétér. Colonel Mure has summed up all the reasons against assigning the authorship of these hymns to the poets of the Iliad or the Odyssey ; and these reasons are conclusive. Yet, if the composition of the greater epics belongs to an age much earlier than that to which it is generally

assigned, these hymns may well have been written at a time which, in the belief of Herodotus or Thucydides, was the age of Homer. These hymns, as Colonel Mure has well remarked, are epical lays, complete in themselves; and among their number he reckons the lay of Demodocos, recited in the *Odyssey*, as being ‘in all essential respects an epic hymn to Vulcan.’ His remark seems to militate slightly against his own theory of the complete unity of the *Odyssey*.

*Note<sup>23</sup>, page 159.*

Dr. Mommsen (*Hist. of Rome*, vol. i. p. 18) believes that ‘the enigmatical Hellenic story of the stealing of the cattle of Helios’ by Hermes ‘is beyond doubt connected with the Roman legend about Cacus.’ It is also connected with that of Heracles and Echidna in the Scythian tale; but the solution of the enigma is, in all, the same.

*Note<sup>24</sup>, page 160.*

Mr. Grote, in his short analysis of this hymn, says of this incident that Hermes ‘stole the cattle of Apollo in Pieria, dragging them backwards to his cave in Arcadia’ (*Hist. of Greece*, vol. i. p. 80). This is no necessary inference from the passage in the hymn (75, 76), although Livy (i. 7) has accepted this clumsy addition in the story of Cacus. The poet means apparently that he so varied the track of the cattle that no one could know whence they had come or whither they were going; and so Shelley has understood it.

‘Backward and forward drove he them astray,  
So that the tracks which seemed before were aft.’ (xiii.)

This would accurately describe the action of wind, while the other device would not.

*Note<sup>25</sup>, page 160.*

The Hymn to Hermes (111) ascribes to him the gift of

fire, thus asserting more and less than Shelley in his translation—

‘Mercury first found out for human weal  
Tinder-box, matches, fire-irons, flint and steel.’ (xviii.)

The list should be brought down to the mere item of tinder-wood. Mr. Kelly would refer this legend to the Sanskrit *chark*, in which the fire is churned. See his Curiosities of Indo-European Folk-lore.

*Note<sup>26</sup>, page 161.*

Hymn, 130. This line is unfortunately diluted by Shelley—

‘His mind became aware  
Of all the joys which in religion are.’ (xxi.)

*Note<sup>27</sup>, page 161.*

Introd. p. 48.

*Note<sup>28</sup>, page 167.*

Hymn, 372-3. This seems by far the keenest piece of satire to be found in the poem. The passage, in fact, lays down the great principles of English law, that a criminal charge must be proved by witnesses, and that prisoners are not to be threatened or coerced into confession. It is a passage which might come from the poet of a people who met in Agora in the age of the Iliad, but could never have come from the Asiatic. It would be well for French justice if it might less frequently be said of the judge—

*μηνένι ἐκέλευν αὐταγκαίης ὅπο πολλῆς.*

*Note<sup>29</sup>, page 171.*

The contrast in the tone of this passage (Hymn, 549) with the concluding lines of the Hymn to Apollo is manifest. See, further, Tales of the Gods and Heroes, note 13, p. 293.

*Note<sup>30</sup>, page 171.*

The Thriæ are beings of the same type with the Graæ and the Gorgons.

*Note<sup>31</sup>, page 172.*

Colonel Mure, who with Mr. Grote thinks that the oxen were dragged by their tails, holds that ‘it is the supernatural element of the subject which alone gives point and seasoning to an otherwise palpable extravagance’ (*Crit. Hist. Gr. Lit.* vol. ii. p. 339). His explanation apparently fails altogether to account for the character of the hymn. It may be true that ‘Hermes, in his capacity of god, is gifted from the first moment of his existence with divine power and energy,’ but so also is Apollo; and if, ‘as a member of the Hellenic pantheon, he is subjected to the natural drawbacks of humanity, and, by consequence, at his birth to those of infancy,’ so also, again, is Apollo. Nor does this help to explain why Hermes should go off to play, sing, and thieve, when but a few hours old. Colonel Mure believes that the ‘spirit of the jest’ lies in ‘the obligation to perform, through the agency of his imbecile human personality, the mighty deeds’ by which he seeks ‘at once to assert his rank among his fellow-gods;’ but he forgot that the real point to be explained is, why Hermes should have to do this any more than Apollo or Dionysos. It is characteristic of Colonel Mure’s criticism to pronounce the making of the lyre ‘an elegant expedient,’ hit on by the poet, for ‘accommodating the dispute (between Hermes and Apollo) on terms honourable to each party’ (p. 343).

*Note<sup>32</sup>, page 174.*

Mr. Grote (*Hist. of Greece*, vol. ii. p. 320, &c.) has brought out very vividly the influence of the great festivals at Olympia and elsewhere in imparting to the various Hellenic tribes something like a national character.

*Note<sup>33</sup>, page 176.*

In Minos Professor Max Müller recognises the Sanskrit Manu, a mortal Zeus (Comp. Myth. p. 61).

*Note<sup>34</sup>, page 180.*

Skylla, according to one version, was changed into a fish, Nisos into an eagle. This is one of the many involuntary transformations which occur in Greek mythology. See, further, note 43.

*Note<sup>35</sup>, page 184.*

The power of transformation at will, exercised by Phœbus Apollo (Gods and Heroes, p. 115) as well as Dionysos, is embodied especially in Proteus, who, in the familiar legends of the North, appears as 'Farmer Weathersky.'

*Note<sup>36</sup>, page 185.*

Gods and Heroes, p. 171.

*Note<sup>37</sup>, page 186.*

The king of the flaming fire. His daughter Corōnis (who is the same as Danaē or Procris) is here, like the Sanskrit Ahalyā, represented as the daughter of the sun, because, in the words of Kumārila, she goes before him at his rising.

*Note<sup>38</sup>, page 187.*

The story of Corōnis is in all essential points the same as that of the Arcadian Callisto (Paus. viii. 3; Apollod. iii. 8, 2). As in other legends, the real origin of the tale is seen at once in the almost transparent account of Apollodorus.

*Note<sup>39</sup>, page 189.*

For the Cyclopes of Homer, see p. 104. The influence of the Iamidæ is described by Pindar as strictly a moral one:—

*τιμῶντες ἀρετάς,  
ἰε φανερὰν ὁδὸν ἔρχονται.* Ol. vi. 122.

*Note<sup>40</sup>, page 190.*

Gods and Heroes, p. 195.

*Note<sup>41</sup>, page 193.*

*ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ τρίτον θμαρ ἐϋπλόκαμος τέλεσ' ἡώς.* Od. v. 390.

*Note<sup>42</sup>, page 195.*

On the extent to which human sacrifices prevailed in Greece within any historic or semi-historical period, see Grote, Hist. of Greece, vol. ii. p. 170, &c. The origin of the practice may be traced either to a perverted notion of human duty, or to such etymological mistakes (whether wilful or not) as led to the institution of the Suttee sacrifice in India. Max Müller, Comp. Myth. p. 22.

*Note<sup>43</sup>, page 195.*

Apollodorus (iii. 8, 1) merely says that Lycaon was with his sons killed by the thunderbolt. Pausanias (viii, 2, 1), on high religious and moral grounds, is firmly convinced that he was transformed into a wolf. The story, however, is simply a device to explain the origin and meaning of a name; but the Greek explanations of mythical names are much more frequently wrong than right. If the original force of each word had been thoroughly remembered, the great fabric of their mythology could never have been built up. But the growth of precisely such tales as those into which they were expanded was inevitable, as soon as the meaning of the old names was either half understood or altogether forgotten. Under the former class stand Melantho and Melanthios, the children of Dolios and enemies of Odysseus. But the explanation became utterly wrong when the name of Iolē was referred to poison, and the epithet of Lykeios, applied to Apollo, was connected, like that of Lycaon, with wolves. Midway between these two classes stand such names as Odysseus and OEdipus, in which a faint link, still

perceptible in the spirit of the tale, carries us to the old mythical phrase. See Introduction, note 5, p. 108.

But such transformations, few as they are, seem in no way to be relics, as Mr. Gladstone contends, of original nature-worship among the Greeks (*Homer and the Homeric Age*, vol. ii. p. 412). Most of them are to be explained by referring to the language of the oldest Vedic hymns. The bull of Europa is the bull Indra, who is afterwards degraded into the Minotauros and other monsters. On these and on the frequently recurring dragons and serpents, enough has already been said. But there appears to be no attempt in the Homeric poetry to analyse accurately the characteristics of beasts, and to frame tales in illustration of them. The Battle of the Frogs and Mice (xxii.) is a sharp satire, valuable as showing the estimate of a later age for what is called the supernatural mechanism of Homer; and the fables of Æsop cannot be held to prove the existence of such stories during the age in which the Homeric poems were composed. Simonides of Amorgos, in his satirical portraiture of women, shows much the same power of discrimination with Æsop; but he simply uses the main features in brute character to point his sarcasm, without any attempt to depict brute life. The theory which traces all such indications in Greek poetry to an old nature-worship thus becomes utterly untenable. Such a supposition might possibly account for the sacredness of the sun's oxen in Thrinakia, but it cannot account for Hermes stealing them when he is but an hour old. Hence some little uncertainty is also thrown over Mr. Dasent's hypothesis of a primeval belief that 'men under certain conditions could take the shape of animals' (*Norse Tales*, cxix.). There is no doubt that such a belief prevailed long before the time of Herodotus; but if, as it would seem, there is no trace of it in Homer, it is at the least possible that the idea, with all its consequences of wehrwolves and loup-garous, may

be traced to the same sort of mistake which connected the name of the Lykian sun-god with the destruction of wolves, and so gave rise to the fable of Lycaon. To this origin may perhaps be assigned the involuntary transformations to which so many of the personages in the Norse tales are subjected. But there still remains the genuine Beast epic of the North, which accurately describes the relations of brute animals with one another, and, in Mr. Dasent's words, 'is full of the liveliest traits of nature.' These tales Mr. Dasent traces, not to nature-worship, but to 'that deep love of nature and close observation of the habits of animals which is only possible in an early and simple stage of society,' and he refers to similar stories in the Hindu Pantcha Tantra and the Hitopadesa. Hence we have to seek for the common origin of both; but the mere fact of their composition seems to be conclusive against the idea of nature-worship, which, of all forms of thought, would most completely blind the eyes and dull the minds of men to the real characters whether of men or beasts. Had Norsemen really worshipped bulls, bears, and wolves, they would never have written of them with an affectionate familiarity.

*Note 44, page 198.*

Professor Max Müller, in the passage (Comp. Myth. p. 8) where he shows the absurdity of supposing that Greeks sat down deliberately to concoct ridiculous legends, says that this myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha 'owes its origin to a mere pun on λάος and λᾶας.' (See also Grote, History of Greece, vol. i. p. 134; Pind. Ol. ix. 71.) But Delitzch, in his commentary on Genesis, asserts that, 'according to the legend of the Macusi-Indians in South America, the only man who survived the flood repeopled the earth by changing stones into men. According to that of the Tamanaks of Orinoko, it was a pair of human beings who cast behind them the fruit of a certain palm, and out of the kernels

sprang men and women.' The chief suspicion about American native traditions arises from the possible intermeddling of Christian missionaries, who may have thought it to their interest to make out a correspondence of such legends with those of the old world, and especially with the records of the Hebrew Scriptures. Hence Burton, in the volume which relates his visit to the Great Salt Lake City, does not hesitate to ascribe the alleged original belief of the North American Indians in a great Spirit, unseen but omnipotent, to the Jesuit missionaries, who first instilled the belief into them, and then asserted that the Indians had the belief before their arrival. But if the idea of such interference is rejected (and it is, very possibly, worth little), then the harmony of many of their legends with those of the old world increases the marvel, if not the mystery, which attaches to the diffusion of Aryan mythology. The legend on the subject of women, which Mr. Hind, in his Labrador Explorations, says that he heard from wandering native tribes, presents the closest correspondence with that of Pandora in Hesiod. If, then, these Labrador Indians did not learn it from Jesuit missionaries (and it seems highly improbable that they should so have learnt it, nor can we conceive the motive which could have led the Jesuits to impart this legend rather than others), then we must carry back these tales still further to a common source from which the mythology of the Aryan and the North American Indian may both have taken their rise. The agreement of many negro stories with European traditions still further complicates the problem. Dasent, Popular Tales from the Norse, p. xxxi. &c.

*Note<sup>45</sup>, page 198.*

Nothing, it would seem, can be gained by attempts to prove that the legend of Deucalion is derived directly from the account of the Noachian deluge as given in the Pentateuch. It is impossible to deny that essentially the

two stories are the same: but so also are the Babylonian and other legends on the same subject; and if we resort to the supposition of conscious borrowing in this case, we must take up the same hypothesis in every other—a labour before which the stoutest would quail. Further, we should have to determine first which is the oldest tale of the flood, to be found in what is called profane history; and this is a task for which at present we appear scarcely to have sufficient materials. It is of no slight moment that the Egyptians, with whom the Hebrews were in earliest and closest intercourse, had no traditions of a flood (Edinburgh Review, July 1862, p. 100), while the Babylonian and Hellenic tales bear a strong resemblance in many points to the narrative in Genesis. But we have no warrant for assuming any intercourse between Jews and Greeks in or before the Hesiodic age; and the legend of Deucalion was known to the author of the Catalogue of Women, a poem which, if not written by Hesiod, belongs certainly to his age, or to the age immediately succeeding.

*"Ητοι γάρ Λοκρὸς Λελέγων ἡγήσατο λαῶν,  
Τούς δέ ποτε Κρονίδης Ζεὺς, ἀφθιτα μῆδεια εἰδὼς,  
Λεκτούς ἐκ γαῖης λάας πόρει Δευκαλίωνι.*

Mr. Grote refers to conflicting accounts of the genealogy of Deucalion, as given by the Scholiast on Homer, on the authority both of Hesiod and Acusilaos (History of Greece, Part I. ch. v.) It is seemingly doubtful whether the story of Ogyges is earlier or later than that of Deucalion. It has certainly assumed more strictly the form of a local legend; but Mr. Grote supposes it to refer to Deucalion's deluge (*Ibid. ch. xi. vol. i. p. 266*). As evidence of an historical flood, these tales have as much and as little value as the lay of Achilleus for determining the reality of the Trojan war. In Deucalion's flood those who can reach the top of the hills escape: the flood of Xisuthrus, in the Babylonian

mythology, spares all the pious (Niebuhr's Lectures on Ancient History, vol. i. p. 18). In the Hindu version, the flood is universal; but Manu, the man, enters the ark with the seven sages, who remain with him till it is landed on the peak called Naubandhana, from the binding of the ship (Story of Nala and Damayanti, Milman's translation).

The names occurring in the legend of Deucalion are significant. His own name suggests a comparison with that of Polydeukes, the glittering son of Leda. His father is Prometheus, in whom we recognise (not, according to Mr. Kingsley, in his pleasant tale of the Waterbabies, p. 286, the false system of deductive philosophers, but) the same idea of piercing forethought, which comes out again in Athénê, Asclepios, and Iamos, the children or the kinsfolk of the sun-god Phœbus Apollo. His wife is Pyrrha, the red, a name which to the Greek mythographers expressed the colour of the earth, but which may rather belong to the class of names of which Phoinix, Iolê, Iolaos, Iocastê, are examples. Pyrrha, again, is the daughter of Epimetheus, the passive receiver of impressions, and so passing into the receptive character of Démêtêr and Persephonê. Deucalion is, moreover, the father of Minos, who is connected with a large family of solar legends, running into the mythology of Argos, Megara, Thebes, and Athens.

*Note 46, page 199.*

Tales from Greek Mythology, pp. 8, 107.

*Note 47, page 204.*

According to the version of Apollodorus (iii. 10, 7), Æthra was brought by force from Athens to Troezen. The tale is a curious complication of myths. Having related the story which made Helen the daughter of Zeus and Nemesis, he goes on to tell how Theseus stole Helen and brought her to Athens, and how Castor and Polydeukes,

while Theseus was absent in Hades, took Athens and brought away thence not only Helen but Æthra. It is easy to see that they could only have been taken while Theseus was in the kingdom of the dead.

*Note<sup>48</sup>, page 204.*

Introduction, p. 14; p. 43, note 1.

*Note<sup>49</sup>, page 208.*

'It was not without reason that Theseus was said to have given rise to the proverb, *Another Hercules*; for not only is there a strong resemblance between them in many particular features, but it also seems clear that Theseus was to Attica what Hercules was to the rest of Greece, and that his career likewise represents the events of a period which cannot have been exactly measured by any human life, and probably includes many centuries' (Thirlwall, Hist. of Greece, vol. i. p. 130). It would have been still more true to say that his life, like that of Theseus, Bellerophon, Achilleus, Meleagros, and Odysseus, is but the sun's life of a day or the yearly life of the seasons.

*Note<sup>50</sup>, page 209.*

Introduction, p. 9.

*Note<sup>51</sup>, page 215.*

The victory of OEdipus over the Sphinx is but the slaying of the serpent Fafnir or the Pythian dragon, by one who to the strength and beauty of Sigurdr or Phœbus adds the wisdom of Prometheus and Medeia. There can be no doubt that the riddle of the feet is a late insertion. It is one of the enigmas in which a rude people take delight; and a different riddle might be introduced in all the versions of the tale. It mattered not what the dark saying might be, as long as it was a dark saying, like the inarticulate growl of the thunder.

*Note<sup>52</sup>, page 216.*

As long as this incident retained any part of the meaning still seen in the myth which tells us how Iolê at the last came back to Heracles, here the tale of Oedipus doubtless ended. When translated into the ordinary relations of life, the unwitting marriage of a son with his mother might well give rise to such a tragedy as that which Sophocles has immortalised.

*Note<sup>53</sup>, page 218.*

Gods and Heroes, note 73, p. 316.

*Note<sup>54</sup>, page 222.*

Gods and Heroes, note 46, p. 307.

*Note<sup>55</sup>, page 224.*

So ends the tale of the long toil and sorrows of Oedipus. The last scene exhibits a manifest return to the spirit of the solar myth. His beauty is utterly marred, and his disguise is as complete as that of Odysseus when he first trod the soil of Ithaca after his return from Troy. Still there is about him a more than human power. He must not die the common death of all men, for no disease or corruption can touch the body of the brilliant sun ; and so the poet says, with instinctive truthfulness, that his departure forms no matter for weeping—

οὐ στενακτὸς οὐδὲ σὺν νόσοις  
ἀλγεινὸς ἐξεπίμπετ', ἀλλ' εἰ τις βροτῶν  
θαυμαστός.

Soph. OEd. Col. 1667.

And not less truly does he associate the very sorrows of Oedipus with the long struggle of the sun against the clouds who are arrayed against him. It is a lifelong toil, and his trials come—

αἱ μὲν ἀπ' ἀελίου δυσμᾶν,  
αἱ δ' ἀνατέλλοντος,  
αἱ δ' ἀνὰ μέσσαν ἀκτῖν',  
αἱ δὲ νυχιᾶν ἀπὸ φιπᾶν. OEd. Tyr. 1243.

*Note<sup>56</sup>, page 227.*

A counterpart to this act is found in the Roman tales of the self-devotion of Curtius and the Decii.

*Note<sup>57</sup>, page 228.*

Paus. ix. 8, 2. The same tokens were alleged as proof of the burial-place of many a mediæval saint. See also Grote, History of Greece, vol. i. p. 374.

*Note<sup>58</sup>, page 231.*

The reason which Antigonē gives as determining her conduct is eminently characteristic. If her husband die, she may marry again; if she lose one child, she may have another; but when her parents are dead she cannot hope for more brothers. Herodotus represents the wife of Intaphernes as choosing to save her brother and abandon her husband and children to death (iii. 119). Now, that the tone of thought in both these stories is precisely the same, all must admit; but Mr. Grote apparently takes this coincidence as conclusively proving that Sophocles was the companion of Herodotus. He refuses to determine 'which of the two obtained the thought from the other,' but thinks that 'the comparison of Herodot. iii. 119 with Soph. Antig. 905, proves a community of thought . . . hardly explicable in any other way' (History of Greece, vol. viii. p. 443). But this only starts a fresh difficulty, for it implies that either Herodotus or Sophocles originated this thought, which, as Mr. Grote asserts, 'is certainly not a little far-fetched,' and, as we might safely add, is to all appearance decidedly non-Hellenic. It is possible that Herodotus may have brought the Persian legend into closer harmony with Western forms of expression; but we lose ourselves in an inextricable labyrinth when we say that it was borrowed directly by the one from the other. The bear and the

hyæna have no tails. The Norseman and the negro not only say that they lost them long ago, but they account for the fact in the same way—‘that both owe their loss to the superior cunning of another animal’ (Dasent, Tales from the Norse, Introd. li.) The cases are almost parallel. In each case we have fragments of primæval thought which have floated at random down the stream of time.

*Note<sup>59</sup>, page 232.*

Soph. Antig. 1000.

*Note<sup>60</sup>, page 237.*

The rising of land from alluvial deposit at the mouth of the Achelōos was a fact of sufficient importance to demand and receive its own local legend. Thucydides was somewhat prone to believe in epōnymi—that is, he had no objection to say that Italy was named after Italos, king of the Sikels; but when he has to speak of mythical heroes, he generally lays the burden of responsibility on popular tradition: *λέγεται δὲ καὶ Ἀλκμαῖον, ε. τ. λ.* (ii. 102), or else reduces the tale to his own standard of credibility. See Grote, Hist. of Greece, i. 547.

*Note<sup>61</sup>, page 237.*

The sons of the seven chieftains who had attacked Thebes in the former war. Apollod. iii. 72; Grote, Hist. of Greece, vol. i. p. 378.

*Note<sup>62</sup>, page 238.*

The sign of the snake and the sparrows. Il. 300–331.

*Note<sup>63</sup>, page 240.*

These are, in fact, the immortal Harits, who draw the car of Indra up the heaven. Introd. p. 72, note 1.

*Note<sup>64</sup>, page 240.*

This Dodōna is not the later and more widely known

Dodôna of Epeiros. Gladstone, Homer and the Homeric Age, vol. i. p. 104; Iliad, xvi. 233.

*Note<sup>65</sup>, page 241.*

Gods and Heroes, p. 224.

*Note<sup>66</sup>, page 242.*

Il. xvii. 438-460.

*Note<sup>67</sup>, page 243.*

Il. xviii. 117.

*Note<sup>68</sup>, page 243.*

Il. xix. 137.

*Note<sup>69</sup>, page 244.*

Il. xix. 409-423.

*Note<sup>70</sup>, page 246.*

Il. xxiii. 185, xxiv. 20.

*Note<sup>71</sup>, page 246.*

Il. xxiv. 512.

*Note<sup>72</sup>, page 247.*

Il. xxii. 360. This passage furnishes conclusive evidence that the poets of the Iliad were well acquainted with many mythical tales which it formed no part of their object to recount.

*Note<sup>73</sup>, page 247.*

Od. xxiv. 42. Ζεὺς λαῖλαπι παῦσεν.

*Note<sup>74</sup>, page 247.*

Od. xxiv. 84. For a comparison of the groundwork of the Iliad (or rather of the Achillēis) with that of the Odyssey, see Introd. p. 67, &c.

*Note<sup>75</sup>, page 248.*

These are, again, the horses which Zeus gave to Peleus, the Harits (*χάριτες*) of Vedic mythology.

*Note<sup>76</sup>, page 249.*

This withholding of the gifts is the drought which follows when the summer sun journeys through an unclouded sky. The incident occurs again in the story of Hesionê, where Laomedon plays the part of Ixion.

*Note<sup>77</sup>, page 256.*

Pind. Pyth. ii. 74.

*Note<sup>78</sup>, page 257.*

This is one more among the many names which describe the wide-spreading light of the dawn—Europa, Eurydikê, Eurymedê, Euryphaëssa, &c.

*Note<sup>79</sup>, page 259.*

To be tantalised is therefore only a phrase expressive of the disappointment of Orpheus when he turns to embrace Eurydikê, whom he recovers only to lose again. In the restoration of Pelops to life, we see simply the power of the Colchian Medeia, which she can exercise at her will; and thus is dispelled the moral horror which roused the special indignation of Pindar against this tale.

*Note<sup>80</sup>, page 260.*

The question of the date of this poem has been examined by Colonel Mure (Crit. Hist. Gr. Lit. vol. ii. p. 360). He regards the poem itself as ‘conceived in a very happy spirit of mixed Homeric and Aristophanic satire against the absurdities of the popular religion.’ Yet it is, after all, simply the inevitable extension of a principle which is seen at work in the Iliad and the Odyssey. In those poems, it is true, some of the gods and heroes are saved from the indignity of sarcasm; and the reasons why they should be so preserved are plain. But the transition to the temper of actual satire becomes natural, when we look to the singular passage in

which Hêrê, Poseidon, and Athénê are represented as absurdly foiled by a mere giant in their attempt to bind the father of gods and men (Il. i. 400). It may well be doubted whether even the lay of Demodocos would furnish a more powerful stimulus to the sarcasm of a later age than this passage which Mr. Gladstone has unaccountably ignored in his description of the attributes and character of the spotless Athénê.

Professor Max Müller quotes (Hist. of Sanskrit Literature, p. 494) a hymn in the 7th Mandala, which, under form of a panegyric of the frogs, 'is clearly a satire on the priests.' 'It is curious to observe,' he adds, 'that the same animal should have been chosen by the Vedic satirist to represent the priests, which by the earliest satirist of Greece was selected as the representative of the Homeric heroes.'

*Note<sup>81</sup>, page 261.*

It seems almost profane to point out the sarcasm which attacks the words of Hector in what is perhaps the most beautiful passage of the Iliad—

μάθον ἵμεναι ἴσθλός  
αἰεὶ καὶ πρώτοισι μετὰ Τρώεσσι μάχεσται.

*Note<sup>82</sup>, page 265.*

A privilege which, before the final struggle between Achilleus and his enemies, Zeus reserves to himself, that he may gladden his heart with the sight of the battle (Il xix. 23).

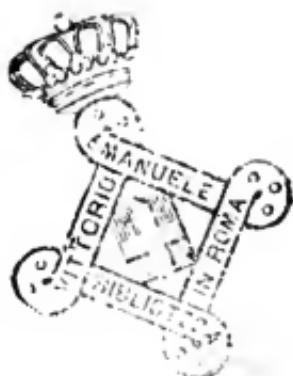
*Note<sup>83</sup>, page 267.*

A reference to the mission of all the gods, by Zeus, to take part in the final conflict of the Iliad.

*Note<sup>84</sup>, page 267.*

The names of the frog and mouse warriors are scarcely more transparent than those of many heroes and minor

characters in the Iliad and Odyssey. Eurykleia and Melantho tell their tale as clearly as Psicharpax and Troxartes; but these names of the later poem are, in Colonel Mure's words, 'the more interesting to the modern reader from the light they throw on many petty details of social life in the age from which the poem has been transmitted' (*Crit. Hist. Gr. Lit.* vol. ii. p. 359).



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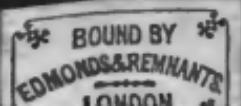
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